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NOVEMBER, 1954

THE Liguorian

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LOVERS OF GOOD READING

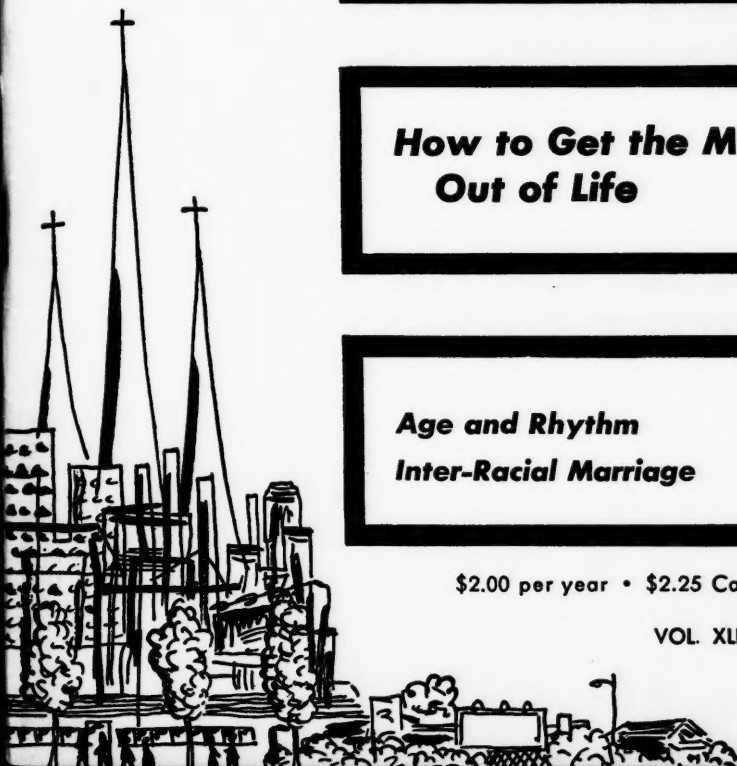
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The Liguorian

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Editor: D. F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

Associate Editors:

M. J. Huber, C.S.S.R.

L. Miller, C.S.S.R.

E. Miller, C.S.S.R.

R. Miller, C.S.S.R.

T. E. Tobin, C.S.S.R.

D. Corrigan, C.S.S.R.

J. Schaefer, C.S.S.R.

J. E. Doherty, C.S.S.R.

Promotion: R. A. Gaydos, C.S.S.R. — C. A. Bodden, C.S.S.R.

Subscription Manager: J. Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

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THE

November, 1954

Liguorian

a magazine for the lovers of good reading



Devoted to the Unchangeable Principles of Truth, Justice, Democracy and Religion, and to All That Brings Happiness to Human Beings

Is Death the End?

No human being ever lived who did not ask this question. No human being lives today who cannot know the answer. No one knows it who cannot think of it with profit.

Donald F. Miller

NO QUESTION can possibly be asked that has more meaning for more people than the above. On the answer that he gives to it, every individual in the world builds up the practical principles by which he lives. In so doing all human beings in the world divide themselves into two classes: those who accept as certain a real, personal continuing life after death, and those who deny that there is any such thing.

These words, in answer to that question, are directed both to those who are already convinced that the answer is yes, and to those who have thus far always insisted to themselves that the answer is no.

1.

If you are convinced that death will not be the end of your personal, conscious existence, you still need to think often and deeply about this fact and its implications. You need to think about it especially in certain situations and circumstances that seem to challenge your convictions, or to urge you to act as if there were no such thing as life after death for you.

You need to have many thoughts about the reality of life after death in time of bereavement, i.e.; when death strikes someone whom you dearly love and, in the first hours of your grief, seems to create so final and lasting a separation between you. The stillness of the features of the dead, the impossibility of their acknowledging by any sign your manifestations of love and grief, the necessity of bearing away the body to a resting place beneath the ground, the knowledge that corruption must inevitably consume the body — all these terrible facts coalesce to form the statement in your mind: "Death is the end," and the despairing mood in your soul: "I have nothing to live for anymore."

You need to have strong, clear thoughts about the reality of life after death when you are gravely tempted to do evil. The quickest and most effective silencer of conscience is the suggestion or the suspicion that death means extinction for a human being. You are tempted to give up your faithful but nagging wife and to enter into

a pretense of marriage with the sympathetic young woman who has (as yet) never complained about anything you did, and has repeatedly told you how wonderful you are. Just let the thought that there is nothing to be feared after death take lodging in your mind and no earthly motive will be strong enough to prevent you from breaking up your home. The same may be said of every other evil you are ever tempted to commit, no matter how unnatural it is ordinarily deemed.

You need deep convictions and recurrent meditations on the reality of life after death if you are to meet and withstand the principal arguments that some men with loud voices use to scoff at fixed principles of morality and definite religious beliefs in the world today. They start with a fact that nobody denies: "There is evil and suffering in this world." They draw all sorts of queer conclusions from the fact: "Therefore there is no God; therefore religion is a myth; therefore we need not worry about any objective laws; therefore there is no life after death." You have to equip yourself to see how such argumentation is upside down, and how, starting with the fact of life after death, all other human problems of evil and suffering can be solved.

But above all, if you are amongst those who have heard little but the negative side of this question, if you have been so educated that life after death entered into none of the considerations designed to prepare you for life in this world, if you have been overwhelmed by the high professorial or literary standing of men who proclaim their disbelief in life after death, then you need to think quietly, calmly, perseveringly of such things as are presented here.

2.

No one, believer or unbeliever in human life after death, can deny the importance of this one truth in both the theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, the very thought of life after death raises a multitude of questions that clamor for answers: Do I have a soul that is superior to my body? Is there a God who has power and authority over me before and after my death? If there is life after death, do my actions before death have anything to do with my way of life after death?

In a practical sense, one would be intellectually blind not to see the sharp differences that will appear in the conduct of those who do and those who don't believe in human life after death. It is true that now and then you meet a person who proclaims a belief in life after death but who blithely sails through life without letting that belief influence him for more than very brief periods at a time. But in general, this is the truth: Those who have firm convictions of their survival after death live in one way; those who profess to expect extinction after death live in a different way. Indeed, it may be said that nothing so clearly divides human beings into two classes as their rejection or acceptance of this one basic truth.

Here someone who rejects immortality for man may object that it is not true that he is so different from those who do believe that death is not the end of a man. "You assume," he says, "that only those who believe in life after death can be virtuous and good; that those who do not so believe are incapable of high ideals, of charity toward their fellow-man, and of the many other virtues that human beings can practice. I deny this. I say that I don't need to think that I'm

going to live forever to love my neighbors and to try to make this world a better place in which to live. And there are many like me."

There are indeed atheists and agnostics and materialists who achieve a certain degree of virtue and even nobility in their lives. But there are also explanations of their conduct and its motives that leave unchanged the principle that there is a vast difference between those who believe in life after death and those who do not.

The materialist's virtues are the respectable virtues, i.e., those that are honored by the world. In some cases these are the same as those practiced by the Christian for the sake of his soul, but for the materialist they produce only a certain self-satisfaction in himself, besides bringing him honor from the world. In many matters, however, the materialist will consider a certain course of action to be virtuous (and much of the world will go along with him) which to the believer in God and a soul and life after death can only be a terrible evil. Margaret Sanger, for instance, considers herself a great crusader for virtue in promoting birth-control, and much of the world honors her as such. If she truly believed in God and a spiritual soul and life after death, she would recognize the truth that she is actually turning men and women aside from the very destiny for which they were made.

Apart from all this there remains the simple truth that for the most of mankind real virtue can flourish only under the lash of the motivation provided by the conviction of life after death. For the rest, believing that death is the end of all for them, either the idea of virtue will be changed to fit their moods and desires, or occasions will arise when they will see no

point in not acting contrary to their idea of virtue.

3.

Can anyone be sure that his death will not be the end of his conscious existence? Can personal immortality be demonstrated to one's mind beyond all shadow of doubt?

The answer to these questions is an absolute and unqualified yes. You can know for certain that bodily death marks merely a change in your mode of existence and not a ceasing of existence, in two ways. First, you can know it with the greatest degree of certainty from the revelations of Christ, the Son of God. Secondly, you can use your reason to deepen and personalize the conviction that arises from Christ's revelation of a life after death for all men.

It is impossible to approach Christ along any of the avenues through which He appeals to all men without recognizing almost immediately that He came to give undeniable assurance of life after death to all. And as soon as one finds that all His words and all His actions and all His promises and commands were backed up by miracles that marked Him as possessing the omnipotence of God, every doubt about the reality of the life after death that He taught is swept away.

His whole life, all His teaching, and the many proofs He gave of His divinity, are recapitulated in His resurrection from the grave. In that one triumphant act He reaffirmed His divinity; He summed up by example His teaching that all men shall pass through death into a conscious resurrection; He gave the final answer to every atheist or agnostic or materialist who would ever live.

In so doing, however, Jesus Christ confirmed a truth that human beings

could attain by using their reason, if that reason had not been darkened and hampered by the effects of original sin. In its present state human nature needs Christ's revelation of life after death to be certain that it will really be; yet that certainty is enhanced by reflection on how Christ's teaching on life after death dovetails with the intimations of and arguments for immortality that inevitably emerge from human reason. Some of these intimations and arguments are the following.

1. The very existence of God once recognized leads the human mind to accept life after death as a reality. For if there is a God, He is all just and all powerful; that is to say, His power must make justice ultimately prevail among men. But justice does not prevail among all men before their death. Virtue often languishes in pain here on earth; vice flourishes with prosperity. There must be a life after death for all men in which a just God will right all wrongs, reward all good, punish all evil, manifest the perfect justice of His omnipotent rule.

2. The instincts created in the human heart constitute evidence to the human mind of the endless life after death that all men will know. No universal instincts in any creatures have been created in vain or to be mocked and frustrated. All human beings (even suicides in their perverse way of thinking) want life, enduring life, lasting life, fuller and better life than they know in this world. There would be no such yearning in the heart of man if it were not to be fulfilled in life after death.

3. The nature and capacities of the mind and will of all human beings give evidence of the spiritual character of the soul in which they reside,

and of the destiny of incorruptibility for which it was made.

The mind of man can embrace and enfold spiritual thoughts and realities. It can know such purely spiritual things as invisible essences, moral principles, religious truths, even God. To know such things, it must be spiritual, and must be rooted in a spiritual substance which is the human soul. A spiritual substance is one that is destined by its nature for incorruptibility. Every time a man thinks of God, or the law of charity, or the duty of justice, or of eternity, he should be reminded by that very thought that he will never really die.

The free will of man has the power to choose, not only between various material goods, but between material goods on one side, and spiritual or divine goods on the other. It would never possess this power if there were no spiritual, divine and eternal life to which its choices were related. If death were the end of man, then his life on earth would offer him only temporal and visible and material things from amongst which he might choose. Every time a man finds himself urged to do something noble for the love of virtue, or the fear of God, or the hope of spiritual satisfaction and reward, he should recognize in himself a new evidence of the fact that he is destined never to die.

4. Even the heart with its human loves gives intimations to man of his immortality. True love and lasting love on earth is experienced as only a beginning. It is felt to be something that cannot and should not die. With it go dreams of the perfection of love that are never fulfilled in this world. Above all, when death breaks the bond of union between those who have truly loved each other, the temp-

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tation to despair is always crossed with the instinctive thought: "This cannot be the end. This love of ours, so shattered now, must be destined to continue in another world." This would not be except God willed it and willed its fulfillment as well.

4.

Thus is the most important fact about himself rounded into conviction by any human being who uses the power to think and to know and to believe that has been given him by God. The surest and fullest certainty comes, of course, only from God's words and from the life and death and resurrection of Christ; but a score of

other evidences and intimations help to keep the certainty present to his mind.

The more a man thinks about the basic truth that death is not his end, the more his life will be ruled by the three truths that follow upon it:

1) There are two kinds of life after death: a life of sorrow and a life of joy.

2) The kind of life I shall have after death depends on the kind of life I lead before.

3) I prepare myself for a life of everlasting joy after death only by following Christ, the Son of God, as the way, the truth and the life for me.

Doubtful Praise For Singing

To St. Gregory the Great, at the close of the sixth century, goes the credit for developing and bringing to its full flower that type of church music which we now identify as Gregorian chant.

John, the deacon, a contemporary of Gregory, who wrote much about the great Pope, has this commentary on the ability of the Gauls, an erstwhile barbarian tribe, to accommodate their voices to the new music:

"Among the people of Europe, the Gauls have been able in a remarkable manner to learn the sweetness of this modulation, but have not been able to keep it incorrupt, both on account of the levity of mind which mixed some things of their own with the Gregorian chants, and from a natural savageness.

"For Alpine races, deeply resounding in the thunder of their voices, are not readily accommodated to the sweetness of sustained modulation; for when the barbarous roughness of a bibulous throat strives to produce soft singing with inflections and accents, it casts their voices into a certain natural grating like the confused sound of wagons coming down stairs, and instead of soothing the minds of the hearers, rather provokes them to exasperation and clamorous interruption."

Same Fate

A missionary in Africa one day went to great pains to tell the children in his catechism class a story about a lamb who disobeyed its parents, left the flock and went wandering off by itself. In its wanderings it met a lion who promptly seized and devoured it. The missionary concluded his story by saying: "If the lamb had been obedient and stayed with the flock, its life would have been spared. Isn't that true?"

"No, Father," replied one of the bronzed youngsters. "If the lamb stayed with the flock, it would not have been eaten by the lion; it would have been eaten by us."

Problems of Professional People

Francis J. Connell

Officiating at Marriages

Problem: When may a Catholic civil official — judge, mayor, justice of the peace, etc. — lawfully officiate at a marriage?

Solution: The answer depends on the religious affiliation and the marital status of those who seek his services at their marriage ceremony. The answer is clear when both parties are non-Catholics, who have never been members of the Catholic Church, and are not prevented by any impediment from contracting a valid marriage. For practical purposes this means that neither is a divorced person with a spouse still living, and that they are not near relatives. As far as the law of God and the law of the Catholic Church are concerned, the marriage of such a couple may be celebrated validly and lawfully in the presence of a civil official. Hence, the Catholic civil official need have no scruples in officiating at such a marriage. If the two are baptized non-Catholics, their marriage is a sacrament, just as truly as the marriage of two Catholics celebrated in the presence of the priest.

A more difficult problem occurs when the couple are non-Catholics seeking to marry but evidently incapable of contracting a valid marriage. The most usual case is that of the Protestant couple, one of whom is a divorced person with a spouse still living. The Catholic official knows that the civil divorce does not actually break the bond of a true marriage, and hence that the divorced person cannot contract another valid marriage as long as his previous spouse survives. What, therefore, should be his reply when a couple in this situation ask his services at their marriage?

If the Catholic official can refuse to perform the marriage ceremony without anticipating any grave loss or harm he is obliged to do so. This would ordinarily be the case when a justice of the peace is asked to officiate, because he is usually free to refuse his services without suffering any greater inconvenience than the loss of the fee. A judge might find it more difficult to refuse. But if some grave detriment was to be feared, such as the loss of his post, he is allowed to officiate, because he is merely a public witness at the ceremony, a material co-operator, and for sufficiently grave reasons one may co-operate materially toward the sin of another.

The most difficult case occurs when Catholics seek his services for a marriage which he knows is null and void, inasmuch as a Catholic is bound to appear for a valid marriage before a priest. In that event the Catholic official is strictly bound to refuse to perform the ceremony unless otherwise he would have to suffer some very great harm, and he should then inform the Catholic that he himself regards the marriage as invalid. Such, at least, is the decision given by the famous canonist, Cardinal Gasparri (*De matrimonio*, II, n. 1301).

All Hail to All Saints

Ernest F. Miller

Give thought to the millions of souls who have gone before you, many through the same trials and with the same temptations that you are enduring, and have won the joy that is waiting for you to win.

NOVEMBER has two feast days that Catholics celebrate all over the world. November 1st is All Saints' day. November 2nd is All Souls' day. All Souls' day extends throughout the rest of the month. All Saints' day is more or less confined to the day itself.

It is right and proper to think about and to pray for the souls in purgatory during November. Any Catholic who refuses to do so will undoubtedly have a hard time quenching his own purgatorial fires when finally he finds himself in their midst. There will not be a soul to say a good word for him, for there was not a soul he helped when help was in his power to give. He will remain in the hands of the torturers until he has paid the last farthing of his debt. This is not a very pretty prospect.

But the fact that November is dedicated to the poor souls in purgatory should not cause the world to forget that November is also the month dedicated to the happy souls in heaven, or that there is at least one day in November, the 1st, completely given over to these holy and happy souls who, in the terminology of the Church, are called saints, though that title is spelled with a small "s."

November 1st is so important a day in the eyes of the Church that it is a holy day of obligation, and all Catholics must go to Mass, just as they must go to Mass on Sunday, or commit a mortal sin. Not many days in the course of a year are considered important enough to be made holy days of obligation.

The saints commemorated on All Saints' day are not primarily the canonized saints — saints like the apostles, or St. Joseph, St. Anthony and the other famous people who have been given pedestals in sanctuaries and before whom candles are occasionally burned. Of course, they are not excluded. But they have feast days of their own. Their chosen followers are always praying to them and trying to imitate their example. It is unlikely that they will be forgotten. Nor do they need any extra days of celebration to keep their memory fresh.

Who, then, are the main characters of this special feast? Just ordinary folks who served God well and died in His love — not those who served God spectacularly and who were empowered by God to work all kinds of startling miracles and to convert thousands upon thousands of pagans by

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their sermons and by their phenomenal mortifications, but simple, good people like your and my mother and father, like your brother and my sister, like that old lady down the street who was so generous with the paper-boy (always a tip when she paid him his weekly dues for delivering the paper to her door) and so kind to the ash-man and the meter-man, in fact to everybody with whom she ever came in contact.

There are innumerable people like these. They live and they die and they go to heaven. Of course they had some faults when they were on earth. They flew off the handle and even threw things around once in awhile. They possibly told a little lie and made an uncharitable remark about some fakir who was putting on a lot of airs when his only claim to fame was the fact that he was filled with air, mostly hot.

Yes, they stumbled and faltered and fell. But they always got up again. They never stayed down any longer than they could help. Just as Our Lord got up after His three falls on the road to Calvary, so also did they get up whenever they had the misfortune to fall. God was the complete center of their thoughts, their actions, their very lives. God was the One they wanted to please more than anybody else.

And yet, nobody looked upon them as particularly holy people. When they died, their friends remembered their faults, not bitterly but kindly. Their friends knew that their bodies would go back to dust, that there would be no incorruptibility here. And so they did not call them saints in the sense in which a mystic or a miracle-worker is called a saint.

But they were saints nevertheless — saints in their own way, the small

"s" kind of saints, saints in a fashion that was pleasing to Almighty God. And even though the Church never got around to giving them the official title of saint, they are saints in heaven just as much as the most thoroughly canonized saint in the litany of the saints. They too possess a shining halo and of a sudden have been filled with an immeasurable happiness.

Sainthood means the state of grace, that is, dying in the state of grace. Anybody who dies in the state of grace is a member of God's own family. He can go in the back door without knocking. He can sit in the front room with his shoes off. He is perfectly at ease in His Father's house. God considers Him one of the family because he is in the state of grace. In other words, he has no mortal sin upon his soul. Everybody who dies in the state of grace becomes a saint.

Of course there are degrees of sanctity. Some saints are greater saints than other saints. But even a small saint is still a saint. A small glass can be just as filled with water according to its capacity as a big glass. So with saints. Every person in the state of grace is some kind of a saint, even though the state of grace be not so visible in them as in a St. Paul or a St. Therese.

It is entirely possible that some of the people in heaven, of whom the world knows absolutely nothing, are greater saints than those men and women who have received the honor of canonization. Why then are they not canonized themselves? Surely the world knows that much about them. Surely they must have had some friends and acquaintances who could have got the word around that they had led a pretty holy life before they died. Surely they must have worked

a miracle or two if their holiness was the real thing.

Why everybody who goes to heaven is not canonized is God's business, and He does not have to tell us the reasons if He does not want to. He can tell us when we go to heaven and become a part of the band of saints ourselves. It is not good for us to know everything. We might be inclined to act like Lucifer, and then have the misfortune of ending up like Lucifer.

However, there is nothing wrong in hazarding a guess or two as to why God acts the way He does and not in some other way. It is quite probable that God permits a good and holy person to be canonized not only or primarily for the glorification of the person himself or herself but for the edification and encouragement of those who are on earth and who are finding it rather difficult to lead a good life.

It is soon noticed, when the lives of saints are read, that there are canonized saints for all classes of people, for all times, for all types of life. There are canonized saints for the rich and the poor, for war and peace, for the active life and the hidden life. There are canonized married saints and canonized single saints. There are canonized saints who are farmers, doctors, lawyers, common laborers and lepers. You can hardly think of one profession in life that has not produced at least one canonized saint.

It seems that every once in a while God picks out some individual from these classes, adorns him with miracles and moves His Church to canonize him after he dies. Then the people who see this and who belong to the same class or station in life as the saint, are encouraged to keep on trying to lead a good life. They say, "If

he did it, certainly I can do it. If she raised eight children on practically nothing, had a husband who was no good, and finally became a canonized saint, I can do so too. I also can become a saint in spite of the roughness of the circumstances of my life."

One such example from time to time is enough to show poor struggling men and women that holiness is possible. There would be no point in having everybody canonized who lived and died in the odor of holiness. The Pope in Rome would have time for nothing else except canonizations. Besides, the real reward of a good life is not in the applause of people on earth and the blare of the silver trumpets in St. Peter's and marble statues in prominent niches, but in the joys and delights of the beatific vision, heaven, the company of the angels, and the eternal tranquility and peace that fill the soul as water saturates a sponge.

Really the saints are not interested in having their friends burn incense before their likenesses, and would have none of it were it not for God's decree that it is their job to show human beings that holiness is possible no matter what the station or the situation of life. Why God picks one saint over another to receive canonization, well, that also is His own business. If He wants to tell us about it someday, fine. We shall not rush Him now with foolish curiosity.

So, up there in heaven there are millions of saints, most of them unknown here below. It is these that the Church honors on All Saints' day, the nameless, faceless, forgotten saints of the centuries, the martyrs and confessors and apostles that are known now to God alone. On one day in the year they are brought out from their

hiding place and made to take a bow.

The celebration of All Saints' day goes back almost to the very beginning of Christianity. St. Ephrem, who lived in Syria and died in 373, talks about All Saints' day in one of his sermons. The Pantheon in Rome, a pagan temple before the time of Christ, was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to *all the martyr-saints* by Boniface IV in 609. Pope Gregory IV in the year 827 made All Saints' day a universal feast day of the Church and set the day of celebration for November 1.

It is a consoling day for the inhabitants of earth, not only because it gives them a chance to think about the great people with whom they will live someday in heaven, but because it proves to them that they too can climb the golden staircase, the steep side of the beautiful rainbow, which is personal sanctity, and arrive in the midst of the stars of heaven, and indeed become one of the stars themselves. The saints are the dispellers of the darkness of discouragement. They are the light of hope for the weak and the feeble and the fallen. The arms

of their example are long enough to pull out of the mire of despair even the lowliest and the least. Everybody can become a saint.

Yes, everybody can become a saint. The feast of All Saints tells the world just that. There are many desirable things that most people cannot do. They cannot become great actors or great athletes or great leaders of their country. Their destiny is to remain small and unknown except in the immediate circle of their own family. Fame is impossible to them. But there is one thing that all of them can do and that is — become a saint. And, of course, becoming a saint is at least one billion times more wonderful than being Babe Ruth, George Washington and Helen Hayes all wrapped up in one. If you could really see just one soul as it truly is in the state of sanctifying grace, either on earth or in heaven, you would never desire anything else for yourself any more. Without seeing it, you can know it and desire it and achieve it, and one day be honored too on the feast of All Saints.

Highway to Heaven

One of Father Joseph Manton's most effective radio talks is a modern parable based on a lonely truck driver's struggle to get his cargo to its destination. Father Manton compares a truck driver's route to man's journey through life. He lauds these drivers as the "modern Good Samaritans" of the road and the most cautious of all drivers, and because they so often aid motorists as "huge grimey angels."

A truck driver who heard the broadcast liked it so well that he wrote The National Council of Catholic Men for a copy, which he sent to the American Trucking Association at Washington, D.C. The Association liked it too. They considered it a great tribute to trucking men and ordered 4,000 copies sent to their members. The Virginia truckers had it printed in their official publication.

"You could hardly get a better picture, a sharper modern parable, of a man journeying toward eternity than a driver in the cab of his truck as he rolls along the grey stretch of road toward his far-off, unseen destination," said Father Manton. "The little sign on the wind-shield says, 'No Riders,' and in the cab of his own soul every man rides alone."

How to Get the Most Out of Life

Mathias Huber

This is a different answer to the above question than you will ever read in the "happiness-columns" of secular publications. But it is the only true answer because it is God's.

SOME years ago a well known businessman was being interviewed by a reporter from one of our great newspapers. In the course of the talk, which was supposed to be on the question of business conditions, the businessman got around to the question of, "Why are we alive?" And the businessman said very seriously, "For one thing, we are in this world to improve things; to get the most out of life and make the world a better and more comfortable place to live in."

The gentleman seemed a bit doubtful about some things, but he was very certain about that one point: we are here to improve things; to build better and faster automobiles and trains, higher and stronger buildings, safer airplanes, more comfortable homes; to develop better electric shavers and headache tablets and stomach soothers.

To get the most out of life!

Now, while there is nothing wrong in the desire or attempt to improve conditions in the world, still that is not the first answer to the question,

"Why are we in this world? Why are we alive?"

If this businessman had gone into any Catholic school and asked one of the boys or girls why we are in this world, he would have received the correct answer at once. We are in this world to know God, to love Him and serve Him in this life and to be happy with Him in the next life for all eternity.

That answer is not a guess. It is as certain as life itself, and it will satisfy the businessman and the housewife or anybody else who is trying to find out just what is the purpose of life here on earth.

Spending your life just to make the world a better place to live in does not necessarily mean living a good life, a life that is worthwhile; but living a good life, living a life that is worthwhile, living in such a way that our life becomes the act of loving and serving God, must mean and does mean making the world a better place to live in. For a man who lives like that is bringing God into his life and

into the world as well.

When a Catholic lives like that, bringing God into his life, it does not mean that he must allow religion to throw his life out of balance. He need not spend every one of his spare moments on his knees or in church. It does not mean that he must neglect his family and its affairs, or his business or his work. He is not bound in any way to give up the recreation and relaxation to which he is entitled. But in all these things we have mentioned, religion can enter; in these things religion can guide him, so that anyone who sees him, day after day, going his ordinary way, will be forced to say with admiration, "There goes a Catholic!"

If a man follows this program of living, does it mean that he cannot take part in our modern way of living? Must he stand aside while the progressing world rushes by? Must he be forever looking up and never see what is going on around him?

No! Let us get the picture clearly. The workingman and businessman, the housewife, the teacher, the nurse, the nun, the priest, the clerk, the stenographer, the merchant, the soldier, the doctor, the lawyer and all others on the list, must face the world every day and go out to meet it according to their calling, but at the same time they must be guided first and always by that one great law, to do what God wants them to do, to do the will of God in all things according to the rules of the religion which He Himself gave them.

And never will any man be of greater help to his fellow-men or do more to make the world a better place to live in than when he is faithful first of all to his duty to know, to love and to serve his God.

That is the teaching of Jesus Christ,

the Son of God. That is the truth He announced when He said to His followers and also to us: "You are the light of the world; you are the salt of the earth." The Church of God must always and everywhere be the light of the world; it must always and everywhere be the salt of the earth and such it must be in its individual members.

Not everyone is called to be a priest or missionary, to work for souls and to bring them to Christ. But every member of the Catholic Church has been called to fulfill the command of Christ: let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven. As a Catholic you are the light of the world to guide others from darkness to light; as a Catholic you are the salt of the earth, the salt that preserves the world from corruption. If all Catholics would be true to their duty of being the light of the world and the salt of the earth, would it make the world a better place to live in?

Well, there's nothing like getting down to facts.

At the present time a great number of persons outside the Catholic Church are sincerely interested in the Catholic religion. They are dissatisfied with the vagueness and uncertainty of the teachings offered by their Churches. They are tired of blindly reaching out for the truth and never finding it. They are confused by a lack of unity and leadership and would willingly embrace the Catholic religion if they really knew and understood its teachings. Most people are fair-minded, and when they have the facts of a case they judge correctly.

The difficulty in regard to this problem is that the people outside the Catholic Church are not in possession

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of the facts. Many of them have false ideas about the Catholic Church and that is worse than having none at all.

What can we do about this situation? What can you, just one lonely Catholic do about it?

Well, here is one opportunity for you to put into practice the command, "You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men."

You may remember now the many times you were asked a question about your religion and the discussions that developed while you were present. You know that religious matters are discussed frequently and freely in the office, in the shop, in the store, at meetings, everywhere. Questions are asked and statements made, especially about the Catholic Church, and it is surprising to see the attention you receive if, on such occasions, you can give a short clear answer or explanation.

Are you always able and prepared to give an answer on such occasions? When you are asked a question about your religion, do you answer with a limping explanation or try to turn the conversation to other matters?

You are not expected to be able to explain all the deep mysteries of your faith; to explain how it is possible for three Persons to exist in one God; to explain all the more difficult passages of the Bible. But you can learn and explain to others most of the teachings of your religion if only you are willing to learn about them, to think about them, to ask about them, to read about them.

It is not difficult, for example, to explain why the Church commands us to assist at holy Mass on Sundays; why she commands us to abstain from meat on Fridays. It is easy to explain the difference between the adoration we give to God and the veneration we

show to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Why you have a St. Christopher medal in your car. Why you have a crucifix in your home. Why you carry and pray the rosary. Why you make the sign of the cross and use holy water.

The next time you hear a discussion about your religion, the next time you are asked a question about the Catholic Church, about confession, holy water or fasting, and you are unable to give a good explanation, do not let the matter drop. Take that one point and study it until you have convinced yourself of its soundness and truth. Think for yourself. Seek information in a book. Go to a priest and ask for information. Do not rest until you have enough knowledge on that point to answer the question from every angle. Then go back, if possible, and explain it to the one who asked the question, to the persons who took part in the discussion.

One thing you must always remember: the people outside the Catholic Church have a right to share your faith with you. Christ died and founded His Church for them as well as for you. God may be giving you the opportunity right now of leading some of these people into the Catholic Church by a simple answer to a question.

You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men.

You are the salt of the earth; the salt that must preserve the world from corruption.

If all Catholics would be faithful to their obligation of being the light of the world and the salt of the earth, would it make the world a better place to live in?

Again, let us look at the facts.

If all Catholics would be faithful to their duties for just one month, see

what could be said of them:

"During the past month every one of the millions of Catholics in the United States has gone to holy Mass every Sunday. Not one Catholic has broken a law of God or a law of the Church or of the civil government. Every Catholic has made some personal sacrifice in action or by gift to prove that he loves his neighbor as himself. No Catholic has been heard to pronounce the name of God or Jesus irreverently. No Catholic has been dishonest in business, cheated his neighbor, or told a lie. Not one Catholic has spoken a word against the good name of his neighbor. Think of it. Not one Catholic has told a shady story, taken part in any dangerous or sinful pleasures or amusements, bought a suggestive book or magazine or gone to an indecent movie. Not one Catholic has led another person into sin. Thousands of Catholic homes throughout the land have once more become the place of happy family life."

Think of the newspapers carrying that story. But it would not be necessary to print the story in the papers. If such a thing would happen, the whole country would be shouting it aloud.

But will that ever happen? Probably not. And why? Because the members of the Catholic Church are still human and weak and now and then they are going to make mistakes and do wrong and break the law. Again, there will always be some who say, "What's the use? Why should I worry? Wait till the crowd does it and I'll follow the crowd."

But we cannot afford to wait for the crowd.

When God gave His law to men, the law was given to help us find hap-

piness here on earth as well as happiness in heaven, He did not give that law to a state or society. He did not give His law to the crowd. He gave His law to each man and woman and child as a command from the Creator to the creature. He did not call us all together and say: "Well, there it is. That's My law. Now I want you to get together on this some time and see what you can do about keeping My law." No. He said very clearly to each one of us, "THOU shalt do this, and THOU shalt not do this. THOU shalt love and serve and honor God, and THOU shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. THOU shalt not kill. THOU shalt not lie. THOU shalt not steal."

That means that you and I must look to ourselves, first of all, and not to the crowd to keep the law and do our duty.

Even in the affairs of the world, there can be no return to normal conditions unless you as an individual, unless you by yourself, perform all your duties and are faithful to your obligations, no matter whether the other members of your family do it, or whether your friends or neighbors do it, or whether the crowd does it. You are personally responsible for keeping the law of God.

Will it make the world a better place to live in? We have God's word that it will. "You are the light of the world." The light that must lead others from darkness to light. So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. "You are the salt of the earth." The salt that must preserve the world from rotteness and corruption.

And that will mean bringing God back into the world, and when He comes He will, as He Himself said,

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bring life and bring it more abundantly. And where there is life in abundance there can be only happiness.

But what if you are the only one who does this? The only one who tries to be faithful to God's law in all things? What if you are the only one who has the courage to stand against the world, who has courage enough to please God without waiting for your family or friends or the crowd to come along with you? Even if such a thing were possible, even if such a thing should happen, you as an individual would still have the personal responsibility of keeping that law of God.

THOU shalt love and serve the Lord thy God.

When you die you will not die with the crowd; when you stand before Christ for judgment, you can't lose yourself in the crowd and hide your-

self from Him. You will be alone; face to face with God. And He will not ask, "Did you convert the whole world? Did you succeed in making the whole world a better place to live in? Were you always just one of the boys and girls, and did you always just string along with the crowd? Did you never do anything to spoil anybody's fun? Did you bring back better times that will last forever?"

No, He will not ask you, "Did you set the world on fire with happiness — the kind of happiness that the world is looking for?"

No, He will not ask you that.

But He will ask you, "Did YOU keep my commandments? Did YOU serve Me? Did YOU love your neighbor as yourself? Did YOU do for Me and for your neighbor what you could? Did you do your share? Did you try?"

Safety Valve

According to the *Hudson Newsletter* a prominent New York advertising agency has a room reserved for members of the staff to blow off steam in when about to lose their tempers after pleading with difficult clients. The room is called "The Ire Escape."

Leading the Blind

A man in a small town used to call the local telephone operator every morning about the same hour to ask for the correct time. One day the operator could restrain her curiosity no longer and she asked him why he did this. He told her that he wanted to be very careful he had the right time when he blew the town whistle at noon.

"My goodness," the operator gasped. "I always set our clocks by your whistle."

Quote

Enough Reward

St. Francis Xavier once baptized the dying child of a poor Indian. When the child died he broke forth into a joyous hymn. The people wondered why he wept with joy when all around him wept with sorrow.

"Today," he said, "I am sufficiently rewarded for all the painful journeys. I have undertaken since I came to India. I have sent one more child into heaven to glorify God."

Hunter and Hunted

A man was packing his bag for a week-end retreat. His young son couldn't quite understand it and asked:

"Retreat, Dad? Who is after you?"

"The devil, Son," replied the father, "and the Hound of Heaven is after both of us."



For Wives and Husbands Only

Donald F. Miller

Age and Rhythm

Problem: I am forty-five years old and have six children, two of them born in the last six years. According to your explanation of the Holy Father's pronouncement on the lawfulness of the use of rhythm in marriage, there must be some reason of a social, medical, hygienic or physical nature to make it permissible. Would not my age also be considered a sufficient reason? My hair is already gray, and if I have another child now, I shall be close to sixty when trying to help that child through the difficult teens. Besides, I already feel the lessening of my strength and energy that naturally begins to take place in middle life, and I know that bearing and caring for another child would be quite difficult. At the same time I do not want to be guilty of any sin. What do you say?

Solution: The answer to this question is contained quite clearly in its very presentation. Certainly a mother who has borne several children, who is now in her mid-forties and therefore may be presumed to be approaching the menopause, and who already feels the lessening of her strength and energy, has sound medical reasons for proposing to her husband the use of rhythm. Medical or physical reasons do not apply only to serious disease or dangers to life but also to such a combination of circumstances as would render both the bearing of and caring for another child a difficult burden. We are sure that any confessor consulted by a mother in the situation above would recognize the reasons for rhythm as valid, so long as the other conditions for its lawfulness were fulfilled.

The other conditions are chiefly two. The first is that the husband agree to the limitations required by rhythm, unless the circumstances are such that his refusal to agree would be utterly unreasonable and even immoral. It is because of the delicate interplay of rights and duties concerned here that it is always wise for a wife to consult a confessor in the matter of using rhythm, and to permit him to decide whether her reasons are sufficient, either in agreement with her husband or in the face of his unwillingness to cooperate.

The second condition is that the use of rhythm be not made an occasion of habitual sin. Any sacrifice or burden in life is to be preferred to serious sin. Therefore, earnest measures, both of prayer and prudence, are always to be taken even when rhythm is lawfully practiced, in order to overcome every temptation to serious sin.

You Must Have Hope

Much of the modern world tries to explain hope away, to do without hope in the spiritual sense of the word. That is why the modern world is collapsing.

Francis M. Lee

HAMLET is a great artistic triumph, but when the thing is over, our stage is littered with corpses and there is nobody left to cheer for. The play is called a tragedy, and that is indeed high tragedy — to have nothing left to hope in.

Happily, we human beings do not cotton easily to such goings on. There is no local sanction for the gent who lies in the dust, refuses to rise and is proud of it, or like Hamlet, is dim about it.

A recent murder mystery projected this fell cheerlessness over quite a few hundred miserable pages. Some chap was thinking about killing some other chap, and this latter chap heard about it, and decided that he had best bestir himself and snuff the candle of chap one. Apparently, the reader is supposed to select one of the murderous heroes and trek along through the bloody pages with positively nothing decent or noble to look forward to. Finally, the murderers manage to kill each other, and rigor mortis impartially sets in with the last paragraph. The author, in our mind, was dead three hundred pages before his characters had the grace to die.

A college professor stands before eighty young men and women, within them the seeds of great moral triumph or failure. Their eyes are bright, their ears cocked, for this professor has a full page in "Who's Who?" The old duffer is about to explain to them all about free will. There ain't any, he

says. Every choice you think you make is really no choice at all, but simply the result of past "conditionings." (As a stamp is "conditioned" for an envelope by the glue smeared on it.) Anyway, if you find yourself drooling before a hamburger and decide to purchase it, that is not free choice, says the professor. What happened was this: when you were a little tot, somebody tickled you as he handed you your hamburger, and you thought it was the hamburger that was making you feel good all over. That "conditioned" you. So, today, when you see a hamburger, you just feel so good and bubbly all over that you have to have that burger. No choice about it; you have to get that burger.

And eighty young men and women walk away from that damnable lecture, convinced that they are not responsible for liberties and excesses in courtship, not responsible for later shady deals in business and politics, not responsible for anything. Each one is simply the complex result of a thousand childhood, (and, if you please, pre-natal) influences and experiences, so that today, the fully grown individual is bound to do whatever and go whithersoever these ironbound "conditionings" lead him. Something like that. And there is nothing left to cheer for. There is no beauty or strength in conquering a temptation, because you were really not free to give in to it, says the professor. Your past had "conditioned" (or better, fettered)

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you thusly. There is no point to virtue, and there is no responsibility for vice. Hope is a word without sense. Why hope? After all, everything is already settled. The drama of your life is over before it starts; your stage is littered with dead souls in the first act, and there is nobody left to cheer for.

Disgusted with such foulness, we dig into the Scriptures with impatient hands, and purge our souls with the story of Job. The epic of his classic hope, his free, unbridled choice.

Job, of course, had everything, a comfortable family, wealth, lands, all. And Job loved his God. So the devil laid a miserably cunning snare to break down this man of God. Satan spoke to the Almighty:

"Stretch forth Thy Hand a little and touch all that he hath, and see if he blesseth Thee . . ."

And then God trusted Job. He did allow the devil to strike His faithful servant, insisting only that the man be not killed. And Satan struck. In a merciless cyclone, the family of Job was destroyed even as they feasted together, Sabaens and Chaldeans rushed upon his servants, his flocks, his lands, leaving them gutted. Fire destroyed whatever was still remaining. Finally, Satan touched Job himself, and left his body an ulcerous mass. Only his tongue was permitted to remain whole, in the diabolic hope that he would curse God when the devil was through with him.

The stage was set for the final moment. The angels of God became still, and even the demons of hell were quiet. God stood in His heaven, and the devil in his hell. It was the most colossal audience in history.

And then, the pitiful little bleeding man lifted up his head. His was the last line in the drama.

"The Lord gave, and now, the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him."

Across the universe crashes the angels' roaring cheers; the stars and moons and suns heave in their orbits; and the Almighty, a Thor astride His heavens, smiles into the dark mind of Satan.

And all because one human being has made a choice. Despite the diabolical "conditionings" of fire, death, and disease, a man freely decides and cries out his undaunted hope:

"Though He should kill me, I will trust in Him."

We love it. Our hearts surge, the stage is alive, and there is everything left to cheer for. Everything left to hope for.

Except in our enlightened age. Hope gets short shrift from our generation. Everyone seems to hope that God will see His way clear to getting the given individual into heaven, but for the rest of his life and his problems, the individual forgets God, and depends upon himself, his luck, and the corner drug-store. And yet, that same God sent His Son upon this earth to insist;

"I am the Way!"

As the poetess, Alice Meynell, urges,

"Thou art the Way, and if Thou hadst
been

But the goal,
I doubt if Thou hadst ever
Found my soul."

We are a craven human race, to live in the hope that God will be our goal and our eternal happiness, and meantime want that He should stay out of the way of our earthly happiness. "Stay out of the way." The way.

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And there is the whole problem again. Our Lord insists that He is the only Way back to God, and if we want no part of His Way, tell me, upon what road are we and whither do we go? A Christian conquers a severe temptation, lest he jeopardize his eternal salvation, and yet that same Christian balks at any intimacy with God, the Steward of that same eternal salvation. Throughout his life, he is afraid to get near Him, live with Him, trust Him from day to day. It is much like a young man who would ardently inform a young girl of his desire to marry her and be happy ever after. They set the marriage date for June, six months away. And then, for the next six months, he does not visit her, phone her, write her, or in any way contact her. Who can believe that his heart is set on that marriage? What can we expect but that the girl will not be waiting at the church for him?

And do we hope God will be waiting for us, deliberate strangers, after we have ignored Him, shut Him out of our lives for our sixty or seventy years? Will He come rushing at us with His eternal delights, begging us to share them? The Scriptures say: "I swear, as I am your God, I am not mocked!"

Even the pagan Romans and Greeks had enough grace to give their gods a place in everyday living. They removed the dubious vestments of mythology and presented their Jupiters and Junos with a human form, and even an earthly dwelling on Olympus. Bethlehem gave reality to such a dream, and we seem to resent it, apart from the Christmas presents.

The meaning of hope seems to be in this story. One evening a gentleman was returning from his work, and as he neared his own home, he saw

smoke billowing out the windows. He ran toward the house, and as he did, he heard his five-year-old daughter crying out from one of the windows. He tried to reach her but could not. The window was some ten feet off the ground. He shouted to the girl.

"Jump, do you hear me, jump!"

But the child could not see him through the smoke, so she clutched the window-sill, crying for help.

"Jump, I tell you. I will catch you! This is your daddy!"

That did it. She closed her eyes and jumped. Right into the arms of her father. You might say that her heart jumped first and the rest of her body followed after. That is hope. It puts our heart at rest, no matter how bad things are about us. The little girl knew her father was big enough to catch her, and that he loved her too much to let her drop. And that is our hope in God. It is a conviction that He is big enough to take care of us, and loves us too much to let anything harm us. Being God, He is surely big enough, and being on the cross, He surely loves us enough. There is nothing halfway about the cross, — He is dead, and His dead Body challenges our every last doubt. I have given you My life, and now what do you think I will yet refuse you?

In fantasy, let the walls of our homes fall away for the moment, and let us be the men and women who lived in His day, and let Him tell us of hope. We have followed Him out of our town, and He has bade the thousands of us to recline on the grass. We have heard of Him, we have met Him, and we are beginning to love Him. But, of course, we have our lives to live back in town. This is only a few hours respite. We must still get back to our trades, we must still

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prepare the evening meal. We must still overcharge for that piece of work we are doing, if we want ever to buy that villa among the hills. We must still convince the spouse that our two children are more than enough, if ever we expect to save the villa money.

But now the Master has turned to us, and as He does, He notices a flock of birds settle among the trees. He was quick for the things of nature.

"See the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Of how much more value are you than they!"

And He pointed down into the valley below, where a patch of flowers was all white in the sunlight.

"See how the lilies grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass which today is alive in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more you, O you of little faith! And as for you, do not seek what you shall eat, or what you shall drink. Your Father knows that you need these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be given to you besides."

And when He has finished, do we think to rush back into our town and to say that he has spoken well, as al-

ways. Another beautiful message, and now back to our lives as they were? Friend, He made no speech. He drew up a contract. He contracted that if you want Him and the eternity that He alone can give you, you must seek it out now! And you must seek it out first! Always first, trusting Him for the things you will need along the way. If you want Him, you will never have your villa by foul means, and never at the expense of the integrity of your marriage. There will be no retching forth of the profferings of human love so that human love can remain animal and degraded and unfulfilled and fruitless. You cannot seek the kingdom of God by denying life to its citizens.

The larks fly into the sun, the lilies grow tall and beautiful unto their God. Only man, sole possessor of the seeds of that exquisite beauty called moral, is stunted. He seeks first a kingdom on earth, and the Kingdom of Heaven is not added unto him.

Whatever you have, the Lord gave it. Your spouse, your child, the health behind your pay-check. And the Lord can take it away. There is only one answer. Although He should kill me, I will still trust in Him.

And that is all that He wanted to know. The rest shall be added unto you.

Queen of the Highways

In these days of fast motoring, speed-limit and Burma-Shave signs have replaced the wayside shrines of a more leisurely age. In keeping with the times, the Knights of Columbus of Moberly, Missouri, have begun a movement to teach the Hail Mary to millions of motorists in the Marian Year of 1954. With the approval of Bishop LeBlond of St. Joseph, the Knights of Moberly have erected sets of blue and white signs, twelve in a row, bearing the text of the Hail Mary. Catholic farmers in the area have donated quarter-mile fence-row strips of land for the erection of the signs. K. of C. councils throughout Missouri are taking up the idea, and the movement is being encouraged on a national scale as a project for Catholic groups.

Taking the Sting Out of Death

Death is always a burden and a penalty. Yet, Christ, through His Church, has surrounded it with wonderful rites and prayers which make the burden easy to bear.

Louis G. Miller

THE remark has been made, presumably by a man who knew he was very close to death: "Other religions may be pleasant enough to live in, but the Catholic faith is by far the best to die in."

By which he doubtless meant that the consolations offered by the Church at the hour of death to her members make her particularly and especially appreciated at that time.

One might indeed suppose that any religion deserves to stand or fall in virtue of its attitude toward death. If I meet with a religion which is vague in its understanding of what death means, hesitant in telling me how immediately to prepare for death, and nebulous in its pronouncements as to what will happen after death, I can scarcely feel that it merits much confidence. If the trumpet bloweth an uncertain sound, who shall hear it?

The Catholic Church has a very clear and definite understanding of what death means, and this is reflected in a special way in the prayers and ceremonies with which she surrounds one of her children immediately before and after death. These are the prayers contained in the so-called "last rites:" Viaticum, extreme unction, the last blessing, and the specific

prayers to be said during the last agony. There is the Office of the Dead, a collection of psalms and other excerpts from Scripture found in the breviary, and usually chanted by priests over the remains of one of their deceased fellow-priests. Lastly, there is the beautiful Requiem Mass, with its accompanying benedictions and prayers.

In the first place, the Catholic Church does not try to gloss over the reality that death is a difficult and may even be an ugly ordeal. One of the great hypocrisies of our age is the attempt to disguise and camouflage death. The sick man with only a few hours to live must not be told of his desperate condition. His weeping relatives, standing around his bed, stare at him with cruel helplessness as his soul slips into eternity.

And when he dies, the camouflage is continued by the morticians, whose one design may be to disguise the fact of death beneath cosmetics and perfumes and flowers and soft music.

Now the true Catholic attitude toward death is much more stern and realistic. It is built on the basic truth that one of the most important duties of every human creature is to bow down before the will of God, his Cre-

ator. Death is the dramatic and final expression of God's will for us here on earth. To accept it, with all its pains and terrors, is the supreme act of resignation beneath the hand of God. It is the final holocaust of self-will, by which a man courageously looks death squarely in the face, having prepared wisely for its coming.

This stern and sober acceptance of death is reflected in all the prayers used by the Church for her deceased members. It appears perhaps most clearly in the Office of the Dead, of which we have already made mention. The very key-note of this Office is found in the two psalms, *De Profundis* (129) and *Miserere* (50). "Out of the depths I have cried to Thee," the psalmist exclaims, "O Lord, Lord, hear my voice," and then: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy."

All nine of the Lessons, or readings from Scripture, found in this Office are taken from the book of Job in the Old Testament, and one can scarcely find anywhere a more realistic summary of man's mortality.

"Spare me, Lord, for my days are nothing; . . . behold now I sleep in the dust, and if you seek me in the morning, I shall not be. . . .

"Thy hands have made me and fashioned me wholly round about, and dost thou then cast me down headlong on a sudden?

"Man, born of woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower and is destroyed, and fleeth like a shadow and never continueth in the same state. The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with Thee! Thou hast appointed his bounds which cannot be passed.

"I have said to rottenness, thou art

my father; to worms, my mother and sister. Where is now my expectation, and who considereth my patience?"

To meditate properly on passages such as these is to savor the dank smell of mortality, to contemplate it with all the accompaniments of anguish and natural fear and distress. And this is exactly what the Church would have her members do from time to time, for the good of their souls. "Remember thy last end," she keeps telling them, "and thou wilt never sin."

Yet even while thus she requires of them that they contemplate death, she always tempers the meditation with Christian hope. The patriarch Job, many centuries before Christ, even in the midst of all the miseries which God, to test him, permitted to befall him, could cry triumphantly:

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. . . . This is the hope laid up in my bosom."

This beautiful expression of hope has been adopted by the Church as a kind of motto; the passage itself appears in the Office of the Dead, in the eighth lesson of Matins. Almost as if in direct answer to the cry of Job are the words of Christ spoken to Martha on the death of her brother Lazarus:

"I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live, and everyone that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever."

This striking passage is found in one of the antiphons of the Office of the Dead; it is embodied in the gospel read at one of the several Requiem Masses; and it is just about the last word spoken by the Church over the

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body of one of her members as it is lowered into the grave.

Around the passing of the Christian soul into eternity the Church has over the years built up some of her most beautiful and tender prayers and invocations. They are, we may say, all too little known and appreciated by those (even Catholics) who, living by the shallow philosophy of the world, refuse to contemplate death.

Consider the Catholic who is taken seriously ill. At once all the resources of the Church are brought into play to help him in this tremendously important period of his life.

To his bedside comes the priest, and the sick man makes his confession, humbly acknowledging his faults and sins, and expressing his sorrow for them, whereupon the priest, by the power given to him, forgives the penitent in the name of Christ.

The priest then (if the sick man is able to receive it) administers Holy Viaticum, which literally translated means "with you on the way." "Receive, brother, (or sister,)" the priest says, as he places the sacred Host upon the sick man's tongue, "the Viaticum of the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and may He guard you from all your enemies, and lead you to life everlasting."

After this comes the anointing and the beautiful prayers of the sacrament of extreme unction over each of the senses: "Through this holy anointing and His most sweet mercy may the Lord forgive you any sins you have committed through this sense."

Extreme unction is followed by the last blessing, as it is called, by which the Church, on condition that the sick man is entirely resigned to God's Will in regard to his death, grants him a plenary indulgence by which the re-

mains of sin on his soul may be removed.

Let us suppose, now, that the course of the illness remains unchecked, and death appears imminent. The priest again comes to the home, and as he enters the sick room, he sprinkles holy water over the bed and all around, saying as he does so: "Peace be to this house and all who dwell therein." On the table beside the bed is a crucifix, with two blessed candles burning, and the priest presents the crucifix to the dying man, that he may kiss the wounds of Christ as an expression of faith and love.

There follows the litany of the dying, which the priest leads, and the family of the dying man, kneeling around the bed, answer with the responses. Each of the three divine persons is solemnly invoked, then the intercession of the saints is implored, each of them in turn, that the passage into eternity may be an easy one for this Christian soul.

Now let us suppose the death agony of the sick man has begun. In this solemn moment, as those kneeling around the bed watch the soul fluttering like a moth against the bars of the cage which enclose it, about to escape into the pure air of eternity, the priest reads the beautiful prayer: "Depart, O Christian soul, out of this sinful world, in the name of God, the Father Almighty, who created you; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered and died for you; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified you; in the name of the glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God; in the name of blessed Joseph, the illustrious spouse of the same Virgin; in the name of the angels and archangels: in the name of the thrones and domi-

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nations: in the name of the principalities and powers: in the name of the cherubim and seraphim: in the name of the patriarchs and prophets: in the name of the holy apostles and evangelists: in the name of the holy martyrs and confessors: in the name of the holy monks and hermits: in the name of the holy virgins and of all the saints of God. May your dwelling place this day be in heaven, the home of peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

As the death agony continues, the priest reads other ancient prayers, begging God that the dying man may have comfort and strength and peace of conscience:

"Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant from every danger of being lost, and from all temptations, pains and tribulations. Amen.

"Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant as Thou didst deliver Noah from the flood. Amen.

"Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant as Thou didst deliver Peter and Paul out of prison. Amen.

"Remember not, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the sins and ignorances of his youth, but according to Thy mercy, be mindful of him in Thy heavenly glory. Let the heavens be opened to him, and the angels rejoice with him."

Then, at the very moment of death, as the dying man with his last glance, looks upon the crucifix, held before his eyes, and murmurs with his last breath the holy name of Jesus, the priest repeats the last cry of Christ upon the cross:

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

Having done everything possible for the soul in its last struggles before death, the Church is now solicitous to free him from purgatory as quickly as

charitable prayers might be able to bring this about. Around the untenanted body, soon to return to dust, the rosary will be said by his fellow-parishioners, and then, at a suitable time, the remains will be conducted into the church and placed before the altar, in order that the beautiful official prayers of the Church may be offered up.

"Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord," — thus does the Church begin this last solemn service for her deceased member, "and let perpetual light shine upon him." In the poignant chant which has come down through the centuries for use on such sad occasions, she lifts up her intercessory voice, now appealing for the dead, now reminding those left behind to profit by the lesson of death.

"Guilty, lo I groan with fear
Whilst with shame Thy throne I near.
Thou, O God, my crying hear.
Who didst bend to Mary's grief,
Didst accept the contrite thief,
Wilt not grudge me my relief."

The solemn hammer-strokes of the immortal *Dies Irae* give way to the Gospel's unmistakable promise of immortality by Christ:

"Amen, amen I say to you, the hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."

And this most certainly means, as the Preface of the Mass goes on to explain it, that "they who are saddened by the certain necessity of dying should be comforted by the promise of eternal life to come. For the life of the faithful is changed, not destroyed, and when the home of this earthly life is dissolved, an everlasting dwelling in heaven shall be gained."

And so on through the Mass, with

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the plea often repeated: "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord," and at the end of Mass, the last prayers and blessing of the corpse in church before priest and mourners accompany the remains to the cemetery.

Thus sadly, yet, in St. Paul's words, "not sorrowing as those who have no hope," relatives and friends of the dead Christian watch as his remains are brought to his last resting place on earth. Once more is heard the stirring reminder of immortality:

"I am the Resurrection and the

Life; he that believeth in Me, though he be dead, shall live."

Once more and for the last time the mourners are reminded of their own mortality: "Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that while we here lament the departure of Thy servant from this life, we may always remember that we are most certainly to follow him. Give us grace to prepare for that last hour by a good and holy life . . ."

For a good and holy life alone can merit a happy and peaceful death.

The Tragedy of Comic Books

Youngsters now spend one hundred million dollars a year for "comic" books, according to statistics in *Publishers' Weekly*. This is more than the United States spends on its textbooks supply for all elementary and secondary schools, and four times as much as the book budgets of all public libraries.

Dr. Frederic Wertham, the foremost authority on the "subtle and pervading effects" of this deluge of crime comics on children, characterizes the damage in a single phrase: "Moral Disarmament." He says, as quoted in *The Wanderer*:

"I have studied this in children who do NOT commit overt acts of delinquency, who do NOT show any of the conspicuous symptoms of emotional disorder and who may NOT have difficulty in school. The more subtle this influence is, the more detrimental it may be. . . . It is an influence on character, on attitude, on the higher functions of social responsibility. . . . To put it more concretely, it consists chiefly in the blunting of the finer feelings of conscience, of mercy, of sympathy for other people's suffering and for respect for women. Crime comics are such highly flavored fare that they affect children's taste for the finer influences of education, for art, for literature and for the decent and constructive relationships between human beings and especially between the sexes."

Confidence

During the days of persecution in England, an old man was offered his freedom if he would renounce his Catholic faith. He refused and was sentenced to die. Since the man had a wife and children, the presiding justice offered to take care of them; whereupon the man answered that he hoped to do them as much good where he went as if he were with them.

The justice, moved to anger, said to him:

"Thou art worse than any seminary priest."

And he replied:

"You say truly, for I shall never be as good as they."

Pre-Marriage CLINIC

Donald F. Miller

Problem of Inter-racial Marriage

Problem: My younger sister, twenty-two years old, has left my mother's home because she is in love with a colored boy. My mother is very tolerant and unprejudiced, and is in favor of equal rights for Negroes, but has urged my sister to think long and seriously before entering into marriage with this colored boy. My mother is very much upset about the problem, and yet wants to do whatever is right. What is the view of the Church on such a situation?

Solution: The Church, while standing on the principle that individuals have the right to choose their own partners in marriage, so long as they observe the laws of God and His Church, is yet deeply interested in the happiness of all her children and constant in presenting principles of prudence concerning the choice of partners for marriage.

For example, she advises both men and women to think long and seriously before promising to marry someone vastly older than themselves. She recognizes that now and then such a marriage does turn out happily; but it can do so only if both the younger and the older person consider gravely beforehand the problems that will arise from their difference in age. In some cases a priest would advise against the marriage of, say, a girl of twenty and a man of forty-five or fifty, because it could be foreseen that their characters could not remain adjusted to the age-difference over a period of years.

The same kind of prudence and foresight must be applied to the question of whether a white girl should marry a colored boy with whom she has fallen in love. No law of God or the Church forbids her to marry him. But she should face clearly beforehand the difficulties that may arise after marriage, not only in the first year when her still young love may carry her through, but over the course of the many years of married life. And if he is not a Catholic, the difficulties will be multiplied many times.

Your mother's task is sensibly and seriously to present to your sister the picture of some of the heartaches and snubs she may have to endure from others if she marries the colored boy. If the girl still insists that she is equal to the test, and does have a strong character and a deeply rooted faith, and therefore cannot be dissuaded from her intention of marrying, then your family should accept her and her husband without the least sign that there is any difference between their marriage and any other in the world.

The Penitent Widow

Carmel, in the twentieth century, was made famous by the victories of an innocent girl who in her teens took the veil and solemn promises of a spouse of Christ, and went to her heavenly nuptials with Him when she was in her twenties as the "Little Flower." Here is a counterpart to Therese Martin, not an innocent girl, but a notorious woman of the world, who also found shelter in Carmel.

Francis A. Brunner

PARAY-LE-MONIAL is a sleepy town of several thousand inhabitants, a French borough already ancient when, in 973, Count Lambert of Chalon laid the foundations of the Benedictine priory which gave the place its surname. It is celebrated at present for its convent of Visitation nuns and their chapel where most of our Lord's apparitions to St. Margaret Mary Alcouque took place. But who knows; maybe some day its Carmel will be as well known as its Visitandine convent. For the second prioress of the Carmel of Paray-le-Monial, Mother Mary of Jesus, the remarkable woman whose life is here sketched, may some day bring new lustre to that ancient locale. In her earlier years she was notorious, but perhaps those retired years of her prolonged sojourn at Carmel will bring even greater fame to her who was the Marchessa Alessandra Carlotti di Garda.

The confused moral ideas of our present time are, no doubt, in great measure the outgrowth of a puritanism which swept over Europe like a pestilence, spreading a morality that commanded people to pretend they didn't know what they did know. The moral anarchy of our own day is a reaction against that hypocrisy. There arose not only the natural human demand to become acquainted with one's own na-

ture, but a contention that human beings have a right to be as nature made them; that which is natural is good.

Christianity, however, teaches that the natural human being is *not* good, that his nature is depraved because, through the fall of his first parents, man is deprived of a perfection which God created him to possess. Only the grace of God, which perfects nature, can make man good, since it makes him once more complete.

From this it follows that Christianity can have no sympathy for a woman who tries to entice another person to rest content in his imperfect state, whether she tries to lure a man into an unlawful love intrigue, or whether, in an entirely lawful relation, she encourages a man to be greedy, vindictive, covetous, selfish, or to pander to his wife's inordinate desire to have every luxury even at the expense of others.

The daughter of Antonio Starabba, Marchese of Rudini, was of the type that could easily mislead. You might say she was a "strong" woman. Certainly she was head-strong, a wisp of a girl with a will of iron, a child looking for all the world like a little angel but impervious to discipline. Perhaps it was this strength of will that brought about her ultimate conversion, but in our earliest encounter with it, all it

produced was her expulsion from school.

The Sacred Heart nuns at the Trinita dei Monti, in Rome, had hoped to bring out in the girl those qualities of high breeding and simple urbanity which they had recognized in her mother, daughter of Count Charles de Baral. But the girl had inherited too much of her father, an immensely wealthy man who was at that time President of the Council of Ministers. The nuns did their best for two long years, then insisted that His Excellency take her away. Ridiculous, said he. Confess yourselves failures? He raged and stormed, he promised and pleaded. Reverend Mother was unbelievably adamant. And so, defeated, he had to bring his child away to his country estate in Sicily.

Here she had the freedom she wanted. Her loveliness enslaved the household. She took to riding, lived for the horses and hounds. In summer she joined the rest of the family at their Piedmontese palace to follow a round of picnics and parties and mingle with the great ones of the land and the young princes of the family royal. In the fall the disgruntled Marchese sent her to one of the ultra-modern secular schools near Florence, where she got her freedom for "self-expression," and lost every vestige of that religion which the good nuns had tried to teach her.

When, at sixteen, she left school, she was a completely emancipated woman. Then began those happy trips through Europe, accompanying an indulgent father to France, England, Poland, Austria-Hungary and Russia. There was even a proposal of marriage: the Grand Duke Sergius. But here Alessandra put her dainty foot down. At the suggestion that she might have to join the Orthodox Church — "a mere conventional adherence," her

father pointed out — she cried out with fury that he might have helped her lose her religion, "but be sure of this, the faith I have lost I'll never abjure, not even for the crown of an Empress."

At eighteen she did choose a husband of her own, the young and wealthy and cultured Marchese Marcello Carlotti di Garda. In October, 1894, she plighted her troth in a marriage which was acclaimed as the marriage of the year. But it was not to last for long. Two boys came to bless their already happy home, Antonio and Andrea. And then came the shock that ended this interval of pagan bliss. Marcello, never strong, had an attack of pleurisy and then the doctors discovered tuberculosis. At the last moment a well-known priest of Verona, Don Francesco Serenelli, administered the sacraments, and the Marchese went to God. That was in the spring of 1900.

Alessandra was reluctant to surrender to the conventions of widowhood. Instead she started out on a long trip, first through the Italian Riviera, then to Spain and over into Morocco. A certain Miss Evelyn was her companion as they launched out on camels through the desert. Here in the wilderness, amidst the lonely stars, she had time to think. One night she said, as though in meditation, "O my God, if ever I can say once more, 'I do believe,' I vow that I will give myself and all I hold dear to thee." Back at Garda she did try to make up her mind about religion. Realizing she needed more than her smattering of Latin and Greek and German if she was to read Augustine or the *Summa*, if she was to find out what Strauss and Harnack had to say, she plunged into an ambitious program of studies. In fact, after arguing matters out one night with a school-friend in a hotel at Verona,

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she humbly went to confession and Communion. In her prayers she recalled her desert vow, but did not feel up to making such a complete renunciation.

Then God permitted Alessandra to take the worst toss of her life. She became intimate with that errant genius, the poet and novelist Gabriele d'Annunzio. Installed at Capponcina with her lover and rejoicing over her pet name of Nike, the young widow — she was not yet thirty — proved a godsend to the scavengers of the press. And she cared not a whit what they wrote. Capponcina was turned into an Oriental alcazar, with sumptuous stables and even Persian rugs for the Arab steeds to lie on! If the fancy seized her she moved to Garda, or made a Sunday trip to Mondragone to see her delicate boys and, incidentally, give the Jesuit rector a good headache.

Yet all the time she was eaten up with jealousy, fearful of her "faithless Paris." And faithless he proved. Suddenly sickness laid her low. She called for a priest; he refused to come. She called for another; he too refused. Whatever we may think of these decisions, they did have one good result; they made her think about her tainted life. Her body was wasted; so was her money. And needless to say, d'Annunzio had long since slipped away. So she lay there, in her ravaged castle, and meditated and prayed and meditated some more.

God's ways are not our ways. A Magdalen is found worthy to kneel at the foot of the cross beside an Immaculate Virgin. And now a discarded harlot, almost out of one of Gabriele's own books, thinks of becoming a religious. In a heart-to-heart talk with a cousin of hers she says quite simply: "One fine day I'll have to be off to be a Carmelite." Can you blame poor

Livia for laughing? But off to visit Carmel she went.

Having returned to Garda, Alessandra entered on a new life, a painstaking effort to resume the practice of her religion, to catch the voice of a God she had not listened to since childhood. She got in touch with good Don Serenelli and later, in 1909, engaged the Abbe Gaston Gorel as Chaplain and tutor for her two boys. These men tried to help her with their counsel, argued with her, pointed out a line of reading. But the Abbe's best advice was to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Where argument failed, our Lady prevailed. She one more believed.

After that things moved so fast that the good parish priest of Garda was moved to say that the Marchese would end up either in a lunatic asylum or as a saint. She studied the ways of prayer, steeped herself in the treasures of the liturgy, mulled over the writings of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, those Carmelite stalwarts, and by 1911 was permitted to enter the Carmel at Paray-le-Monial.

Hardly had she taken her solemn vows when she was appointed Mistress of Novices, and on the death of the foundress, in 1921, she was unanimously elected Prioress. With her old abandon, now energetically channeled, she gave the convent a new start. Within two years the building was remodeled and completed, and new houses were founded at Valenciennes and at Montmartre in Paris.

Then came an offer of an abandoned monastery in the mountains of Upper Savoy. Like another Teresa, she left her cloister to inspect the possibilities of a new foundation there. But her health was gone. Taken to a hospital in Geneva, she died on January 2, 1931, her last message a beautiful summary of what it means to abandon

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one's will — yes, abandon one's will! — to God. "My dear, dear Sisters! For us there is no one but Jesus Christ: no one else, nothing else! Only in His love is truth and life."

Some people might see in her a psychopathic escapist, seeking to bury her past in the cloister. They might think of her as her own Paphnutius sealing up her penitent self in a doorless cell and dismissing any possible demurrer with a harsh *Digna es*. Such miss the whole meaning of the story.

Alessandra did not bury herself in Carmel. She found life there. She found One whom her soul could really love. She found there that sweet constraint, that delicious bondage which is the love of Jesus. She of the obstinate will and unbridled selfishness found peace in conforming to the will of God.

That is the sordid, and the rewarded life of another Magdalen, the Marchesa Alessandra Carlotti turned Carmelite.

On Saying No

Garcia Moreno, martyr president of Ecuador, illustrious for statesmanship and strength of character, but far more for his lively profession of deep Catholic faith, for which he was assassinated, one day had the occasion to make the brief but very wise statement:

"The great evil of our age is just this: that we do not know enough to say no."

No, to all the passions which would drag us down into the mud.

No, to all tricks of social injustice more or less legal, to all that is base, low and subversive.

No, to publications which traduce religion, country, Christian morality, to lurid novels and obscene amusements.

No, to those who insult the faith and decency, and to the more or less impudent defenders of vice and disorder.

No, to shameless fashions, scandalous conduct, and base compromise in violation of conscience.

—Franciscan Forum

Which Gifts Are Better?

A young Chinese communist was attempting to win over one of his Catholic friends, as related in the *Far East*, listing for him all the wonderful things the party would do for him. He concluded his remarks by saying:

"Your priest doesn't really care for you. What gifts does he give you? He doesn't give you any clothes or any shoes."

The Catholic boy unbuttoned his shirt and asked his friend:

"Can you see the things that are in my heart?"

"Of course not," answered the young follower of Marx.

"Very well," said the other boy, "let me tell you that the priest makes me presents of the things I need in my heart. When I confess my sins, he washes my heart clean with the Blood of Jesus Christ. When I receive Holy Communion, the priest feeds me with the Bread of Angels. The clothes your party promises me will wear out; the tobacco will go up in smoke, but the gifts I receive from the priest I will take to heaven. These are the gifts that Moscow has overlooked."

Big Words Into Little

Big words made into little ones, for the sake of the unfolding mind of a nine-year-old child.

Leonard F. Hyland

DADDY, what is dog-dog-ma-ma-t-i-s-m?

Where did you see that word, child?

Here in this magazine. I was looking at the pictures in it, and in one place where there are words instead of pictures I saw something about the Catholic Church. Because that's our Church, I wanted to see what it said.

And what did it say?

It said — wait, I'll try to read it to you and then you can explain it. It says: "Most Americans resist and resent the Catholic Church because of its spirit of dog-dog-ma-t-i-s-m." What is that word, anyway?

It is pronounced dog-ma-tism, son.

But what does it mean?

That, son, is a good question, but the answer will not be easy. Sure you're not too sleepy to listen?

Not if you will explain it to me. I always listen to you, don't I?

I must say you do. But you surely will have to listen carefully this time.

I will.

O.K. You want to know what the spirit of dogmatism is and why that magazine you are holding says that many Americans dislike it in Catholics like you and me.

Do I have it too?

If you are learning to be a good Catholic you do, in the right sense of the word. But the first thing you have to know about it is that there is a wrong sense and a right sense in which the word can be used.

But which is which?

Well, let's take the right sense first. The word "dogma," from which the bigger word is made, means something that we are taught to believe as true. It is usually used in regard to religion, and it means something you are taught by me, or by the sisters or priests who teach you in school as absolutely true.

You mean like when you taught me that God sees me wherever I go or whatever I do, even though I can't see Him — that is a dogma?

In a sense, yes. However, that truth is so easy to understand by anybody who knows anything about God, that we wouldn't have to have much help to learn it and remember it. In the strict sense, a dogma is a truth that the Catholic Church has helped us to know, when we might have been misled if we had been left to ourselves.

How does the Catholic Church do that?

Before you learn how she does it, you should know whether or not she has a right to do it.

How do I know that?

Don't you remember my telling you how Our Lord said to the apostles, who were the first leaders of His Church: "Going therefore, teach all nations, whatsoever I have commanded you?" Our Lord gave His Church the command to teach everybody, especially in regard to those things they might have doubts or wrong ideas about.

I remember.

And Our Lord also said to His apostles who were His Church at that time: "He that hears you hears Me; he that despises you, despises Me." Remember that?

Now I remember.

And to make sure that they would not teach wrong things, Our Lord promised the apostles and all the men who would take their places, "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world."

That was a big promise, wasn't it?

But you see what it means, don't you?

I think it means we have to listen to Our Lord's Church when it tells us what we have to believe.

Right. Now, when the Church tells us that a certain truth was clearly taught by Christ, either by His words in the Bible, or by talking to the apostles who taught it to everybody else, that truth becomes what we call a dogma.

Where do we find these dogmas?

You find them in your catechism. Everything that you learn in your catechism is either something about God that is so clear that the Church never had to say any more about it, or something that people were arguing about until the Church settled the arguments by saying: This is what Christ taught; this is what He wants everybody to believe.

Why doesn't everybody believe it, then?

Because there are a lot of people who, through no fault of their own, are brought up to believe that the Catholic Church doesn't know what she is talking about when she says that something must be believed.

But they couldn't have read what our Lord said about His Church teaching everybody, could they?

Somehow they miss that. They also miss the fact that the Catholic Church has never said that everybody must believe a certain truth without pointing out either where it is said in the Bible or how it was taught by Our Lord and the apostles because it has always been accepted by Christians from the time of Our Lord. On top of that they miss the promise of Our Lord that He would stay with His Church, which means that He would not let her make a mistake in teaching the truth.

Gee, I'm glad you're teaching me, and not somebody else.

Do you think you can tell me, then, in your own way, what a dogma is?

It's something Our Lord taught, and that the Catholic Church tells us we must believe to get to heaven.

A very good explanation. Now, about this spirit of dogmatism business.

Oh, yes. Why does the magazine say that that's what people who are not Catholics hate about Catholics?

That question brings us to the wrong use of the word "dogma" and "dogmatism." Are you sure you aren't too tired out by now to go into that?

No, daddy. Because you haven't answered my first question yet.

Well, I'll answer it, but you'll have to listen carefully.

I will.

Remember those people I told you about who have been brought up to believe that the Catholic Church doesn't know what she is talking about when she tells us what we must believe?

I remember. I'm sorry for them.

Besides being taught that the Catholic Church doesn't know anything, these people have also been taught that they should be free to take the Bible and make up their own meaning about anything in it.

You mean that they don't believe

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that there is any Church to help them to know what the Bible means?

That's right. They believe that everybody has to make up his own religion out of the Bible.

Isn't that hard for anybody to do alone?

It is so hard that what happens when they try it is that they break up into a hundred, or two hundred or a thousand different religions, each one based on what some individual thinks is the meaning of something in the Bible.

Our Lord didn't want that, did He?

I'm sure He didn't. He wanted to show all men the one, sure, safe, clear road to heaven. He didn't want men to make a hundred roads out of the one He pointed out. But that's what they try to do.

What has that got to do with dog-dog-ma-t-i-s-m?

Just this. They call their religion the religion of freedom — a religion in which everybody is free to figure out his own rules and his own meanings of the Bible. They call the Catholic Church a religion of dogmatism, that is, one in which its members all have to believe the same things as taught them by the Church that Our Lord set up in the world. Remember we called

such truths "dogmas."

But wouldn't anybody want to be sure he knew what Our Lord taught?

In their hearts most people do want that. But they don't like being told what it is.

Why don't they?

The main reason is that they have been told so often that the Catholic Church just makes up dogmas, or truths to be believed, without any basis in the Bible or the teachings of Our Lord, that they now think it is true. But you and I know that this is not true. This untrue thing is what some people call the spirit of dogmatism in the Catholic Church. Even you and I would not like the Catholic Church if everybody we ever knew had taught us such untrue things about her.

I'm glad, daddy, that I have you to teach me.

Yes, and you should be glad you have the priests and sisters in your school to teach you, too.

When I get big, I'm going to try to teach people the right things about the Catholic Church.

Wonderful. But in order to get big, you have to have enough sleep. Time for bed now.

I'm ready, daddy.

Making It Easy

A Sister at summer school was trying to find an example to explain the difference between mortal and venial sin, and settled for this one:

"A little girl spilled a drop of water on a table which her mother had just bought. This table had a high polish and the water left an ugly mark, which can be compared to venial sin on the soul. A little varnish remover will renew the former beauty of the table just as prayer and good works will renew the beauty of our soul. Another day, rain blowing through the open window spoiled the entire surface of the table. This is like mortal sin which spoils our souls by taking away all God's grace. The original beauty of the table can now be restored only by a new coat of varnish, while the beauty of the soul can be regained by a good confession."

At this point a little lad in the back of the room raised his hand.

"Sister," he said, "I guess you don't know that you can now buy waterproof varnish at the hardware store."



readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

New Rochelle, N. Y.

"I just read the article on the 'Right to Work' laws. I am a member of the A.F. of L. and I believe that unions are an absolute necessity—good unions, that is. But I think that the unions we have today are 90 per cent or more, corrupt, and this includes the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. You say that the unions have helped the workingman to a better standard of living. That is true, but for every dollar they have given the worker they have put a thousand in their own pockets through one kind of corruption or another. It is my opinion that they are rotten right to the very top. It is not a few minor officials, as you state in your article, but it is the officials from top to bottom who are hand in glove with the gangsters and politicians that are ruining our country. As for the 'Right to Work' laws, they are not so bad as you make out. I think they will force union officials to turn their corruption money into benefits for workers, thereby making the union so attractive that they will join of their own free will. I want unions, good strong unions, because I realize that big business will rarely give the worker his just share. But I do not think it is right to fight corruption with corruption.

D.D."

One catches a glimpse from letters such as this, of what a tremendously successful job somebody has done in propagandizing simple folk into believing that there is not an honest union official or an incorrupt

union in the land. It shocks and frightens anyone who knows a goodly number of upright, honest, Christian union men.

The editors

Anon

"In regard to all those letters for and against the article on Motherhood in the May issue, I wish to tell you how wonderful I thought it was. It was so inspiring and beautifully written that I gave a copy to my daughter who is expecting her third baby. She read it one day when she was feeling particularly low and also gave it to a neighbor. She called me on the phone and was crying when she told me how much it had helped her to go on and made her feel entirely different about a lot of things. She is very young and not too well off economically and has found it hard to keep cheerful with the new baby coming. But she feels entirely different now. God bless you for coming to the aid of those in such serious need.

N.N."

This is published as one of several letters with the same theme. We are grateful for all of them, and pray that other worried mothers will be helped in the same way.

The editors

Syosset, L.I., N.Y.

"Please cancel my subscription at once and remove my name from your circulation records. After reading several issues of THE LIGUORIAN, I find myself in total dis-

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agreement with your stand on labor matters. The 'Right to Work' article in the September issue was the last straw. In my opinion it is biased, unrealistic and shows a complete lack of practical experience with unions or working men. 'Captive' union members, disgusted with feather-bedding, loafing, corruption and in some cases communism forced on them by delegates have their only recourse when they can vote by secret ballot in national elections. You are naive when you say these abuses should be corrected by unions themselves. In this instance at least I can exert my right to cancel my subscription and thus stop supporting principles with which I am in complete disagreement.

W. R. M."

We find it hard to understand the total condemnation of some seventeen million men and women who work for a living in organized labor that is contained in these refusals even to look at the arguments for the essential goodness of their cause. If the seventeen million members of labor unions in the United States are all either viciously corrupt or completely enslaved, then we should all stop talking or writing and get down on our knees and await the end.

The editors

Toledo, Ohio

"I would like to go on record as saying that the person or persons writing the articles on the Negro question know absolutely nothing about the subject. Being a native Philadelphian, I know what I am talking about. Here are two questions I'd like to see answered: 1) Why do Negroes desire to live with white people when they feel so unwanted? The white people don't go into the colored sections to live. If the white people desire to stay by themselves, why don't the colored do likewise? 2) Since the Catholic Church thinks that colored and white should live together, why don't white and colored nuns—and priests—live in the same convents and rectories? Let me

give you a few facts about housing. Prior to 1940 white and colored people lived in segregated areas in Philadelphia. The white people had worked hard for their homes. Then the colored started moving in and the value of their homes went to rock bottom. They had to sacrifice their homes and move because it was no longer safe to walk the streets after the colored moved in. I am real 'hot' on this question because I saw my own father work his fingers to the bone to buy a nice home, and then have to sell it at a sacrifice when Negroes moved into the neighborhood because it was not safe for his daughters to walk the streets. Maybe this letter will go into the waste-basket, but I've got it off my chest. Personally I would rather be married to an ape than to a Negro.

Miss H.T.C."

It is explosive feelings like these that make it necessary to write articles about racial prejudices. Yet little will ever be accomplished so long as there are individuals who liken colored human beings to apes or count them as less than apes. That such call themselves Christians is one of the great scandals of our day. Note: There are scores of convents where colored and white sisters are living together, and scores of monasteries and rectories where colored and white priests do also. And we have seen the problems created by segregated and desegregated housing not in one but in fifty cities. Let's argue about how to face the problems, but only after we have agreed to love all our neighbors as ourselves.

The editors

Maspeth, L.I., N.Y.

"Please cancel my subscription to your magazine. I have read only one issue but I find myself not at all in accord with your interpretations of Christianity and therefore it is very depressing reading for me.

A.F."

Christ's doctrines are not easy (as He Himself said), and it is natural that they

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who "find themselves not at all in accord with them" are depressed when reading about them. If only they could learn by experience that "the yoke is a sweet one," and that the burden becomes light with submission.

The editors

Brooklyn, N.Y.

"Having only recently subscribed to your magazine, I was very much surprised at the slant of your article on the 'Right to Work' laws. The socialistic viewpoint expressed seems hardly fitting for a Catholic magazine devoted to justice and democracy. Why should any employer be forced to hire a group of people who will tell him when and how and for how much they are to work? This is the first I had heard of such laws and I am very much in favor of them since they are quite in keeping with the democratic principles of free enterprise. I particularly resent your reference to 'refugees and down-at-the-heel drifters' willing to work for anything. My parents happened to be refugees, only in those days they were called immigrants. I am proud that my father was willing to work for *anything* to support his family. Perhaps if he didn't work so hard he would have had time to think that his employer owed him a living wage and to join the scum on the picket lines. Don't you believe that the great number of Americans who are willing to compete with union and non-union workers deserve a great deal of admiration?

Miss F.H."

Item one from the papal program of social justice: The first obligation of employers is to pay just and living wages. Item two: workingmen have a natural right to form organizations through which they can bargain effectively for living wages, which employers have not in the past been inclined to pay unless such urging were used. Item three: Both the above principles are nullified when individuals are authorized by

the state to bargain with employers for less than living wages. . . . We have great admiration for refugees or immigrants (our parents among them) who worked for pitances because in their day there was no organization available to compel employers to pay living wages. We also have intense pity for the marchers in breadlines in times of depression, which inevitably follow on the payment of sub-subsistence wages.

The editors

Detroit, Mich.

"I am very glad there are not pictures in THE LIGUORIAN; I prefer the sound spiritual food. Also I admire you for your frankness; good people love you for it, and if occasionally a reader gets mad at you, what of it? Continue as you have been doing; even we priests learn a lot from THE LIGUORIAN.

Rev. J.A.A."

Chicago, Ill.

"During, and shortly after World War II, razor blades were so scarce in New Guinea, where the natives used them to keep their heads shaved, that used blades were gladly accepted as a medium of exchange. Appeals for used blades were published in several Catholic publications and the blades began to pour in on the Divine Word Fathers, in fact, they were swamped. One junk dealer even offered over one ton of them. The sad part of it is that just when my campaign got underway, it was possible for the natives in New Guinea to obtain new blades again, and so they refused to accept used blades. Since the words used by Mrs. M. M. of Forest Hills, N.Y., are almost identical with those I used in an appeal to 'The Sign' several years ago, I feel that it is my obligation to try to stem the tide of old razor blades that is still engulfing the poor Fathers in Techny, Ill. To ease my conscience and to permit the Divine Word Fathers to go about their apostolic labors, unhampered by used razor

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blades, will you please notify your readers that *only new blades* have value in New Guinea.

J.G."

Rockville Center, N. Y.

"In reference to your fine article on frequent Communion in the June issue I would like to call your attention to another group of infrequent communicants — mothers of very young children, who find it impossible to get to early Sunday Mass, and also find it impossible to fast until a later Mass. I know that the Holy Father has covered this situation in his recent encyclical on Communion regulations, and I personally have permission from my confessor to drink nourishing liquids up to an hour before going to a late Mass and receiving Communion. I suggest that you call attention to this possibility to your readers. Many of the young mothers of my acquaintance have never read the encyclical, or they seem to have a vague notion that it is only for the benefit of the sick. Certainly mothers of young babies need Our Lord in frequent Communion. And I honestly don't believe that many of them come under any of the seven categories in your article. How about a little article on the easy way out of their dilemma?

Mrs. C.W.C."

The Three Minute Instruction in the September LIGUORIAN gives the new regulations, made by Pope Pius XII, on fasting before Communion. Mothers of young children will learn that they are cheating themselves of a great privilege if they do not ask any confessor for permission to take liquid nourishment on mornings when they go to a late Mass and would like to receive Holy Communion.

The editors

Minneapolis, Minn.

"I hope that all readers of your article, 'Seven Obstacles to Frequent Communion,' will make use of it to increase their recep-

tion of Holy Communion. With God's grace I have been able to receive Communion almost daily, and I cannot begin to tell you how many graces I have received. I have a peace of mind and soul I never had before. Five years ago my husband left me and our two little children for another woman. Feeling bitter and unloved, I turned in desperation to God, and He has lovingly helped me to bear the stigma of being a 'divorcee.' The criticism and taunts of 'holier-than-thou Catholics,' and the ridicule and jests of my Protestant co-workers, who cannot understand why I do not marry again, have all become bearable because of the strength I receive from daily Communion. I pray that God will draw other deserted wives close to Him, so that in their loneliness they will not seek the companionship and love of another man.

Mrs. E.B."

Far too often deserted wives turn away from God instead of to him. We pray that this example will show many of them the right direction in which to go for comfort.

The editors

Milwaukee, Wisc.

"Nothing I read brings me a joy that compares with what I experience through your short but fruitful articles. Truth pressed into sixty-four pages a month is the medicine we need to counter the 'junk' spread out in secular reams. After absorbing and meditating on one issue of THE LIGUORIAN, I can't help but think that the next one will not measure up, only, to my pleasant dismay, to find that they all leave me searching my soul to purge it of past offenses and influencing my good intentions for the future. . . . Personally I would like to read a candid and objective appraisal of Padre Pio in THE LIGUORIAN. Do you have the facts?

C.C."

We of THE LIGUORIAN are very hesitant about writing of so-called living saints, unless we have first hand experience and

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knowledge of the individual involved. Radio Replies Press in St. Paul has recently published a study of Padre Pio, based on visits to him made by the author of the pamphlet.

The editors

Worcester, Mass.

"You will never make many sales of THE LIGUORIAN in my family, because I spread it all over and everybody already reads it. It is wonderful. And the fact that you continued to send it to me when I told you I was ill and could not pay for it was one of the nicest things that ever happened to me. In fact when anybody gives me the old argument about priests only wanting money, I just show them the card you sent me telling me I could have THE LIGUORIAN free as long as I wanted it. That puts them in their place. All I can say is Thank you, and that my heart is full of prayer for you all.

Anon."

We might repeat here that subscribers to THE LIGUORIAN who find that they are in a financial set-back and cannot afford to renew, but who have always read and profited by THE LIGUORIAN, need only ask to have their subscription renewed without charge. We want readers more than we want money, necessary though the latter is for any good work. God will always provide enough for our needs.

The editors

Syracuse, N.Y.

"First, let me express a word of sincere gratitude for the finest magazine published. It is such a thrill to show your factual articles to others, knowing that they will convey the truth and state the facts in the clearest, briefest and most complete manner. We who are your readers are proud of your work and pray to God that you and your successors in the far future will keep up the good work. Now a query: Is it possible to obtain reprints of selected articles for

distribution to others and for use on pamphlet racks? If it is would you kindly send me a list of your reprints? It is sad to know what strange things many Protestants are taught to believe about the Catholic faith. I have some of their printed matter before me, and to any educated Catholic it is beyond the ridiculous. Yet I have intelligent non-Catholic friends who believe these things, that we adore the Blessed Mother, that we are forbidden to use the Bible, that you priests make your living selling indulgences (what are your rates, Father?), that Mary had other children, etc. Any pamphlets you have that will help to bring the truth to those thus deceived will be appreciated.

F.O."

THE LIGUORIAN PAMPHLET OFFICE has a list of over one hundred booklets and leaflets, most of them reprints of popular articles first published in THE LIGUORIAN. Write for a catalogue.

The editors

Pelham, N. Y.

"I would like to add my own words of praise for THE LIGUORIAN to those of others. It is truly a Catholic magazine dealing exclusively with Catholic doctrine. I am sorry to admit that so many Catholic publications have gone too deeply into political matters. In most cases it is just personal opinions of the editors, but so often in reading a Catholic publication I have had to wallow through hateful criticisms of my government before finding any real Catholic doctrine. THE LIGUORIAN will never offend anyone except those who hate God. Even these will come to love Him through contact with your splendid magazine.

Mrs. L. C."

Jackson Hts., L. I., N. Y.

"Your magazine is delightful — I expected something very dull. After reading one issue (Sept., 1952) I am resolving to receive Holy Communion more frequently.

M. L. M."

Names from the Saints

Louis G. Miller

* * *

Your old friend Finbar O'Houlihan reflects with distaste on the growing custom of neglecting the saints in the naming of children.

* * *

FINBAR O'Houlihan was my sponsor on call.

Occasionally, as I made arrangements for my Sunday afternoon baptisms, I would find that the parents of one of the children to be baptized would try to smuggle in as sponsor someone living in an invalid marriage, or in some other way far from being a practical Catholic.

I try, of course, as any pastor does, to get the sponsors' names ahead of time, and to find out something about them. But despite my best efforts, emergencies will arise.

Now Finbar lived only a few doors from the church, and in emergency I knew I could depend on him.

"Finbar," I would say over the phone, "I've got a job for you."

"I'll be right over, Father." And over he would come, to stand as sponsor for some poor neglected child.

I realize full well that sponsorship in baptism is not something that should be taken on in such a haphazard fash-

ion. The sponsor has very definite duties, and he should know the child and its family. All well and good, and I periodically remind my people of that fact. Yet emergencies still will arise.

And for emergencies, I am grateful that I have Finbar.

Well, on this particular Sunday I had baptized a child, with Finbar acting as sponsor, and afterwards, when the parents with the child had gone, Finbar stayed behind as I brought the white cloth and the salt and the candle and blessed oils into the sacristy.

"Father," he said to me, "what name was it you gave that child?"

"Lester Joseph."

"I thought that's what I heard you say."

"Why, what's wrong with it?"

"I haven't any complaints about the 'Joseph.' That's as fine a name as any male child could have. But Lester! What saint ever was called Lester?"

"None, so far as I know."

By this time we had walked over to the rectory, and Finbar was taking his pipe from his pocket. I knew I was in for a discussion.

"Now it's a funny thing how these unsanctified names are taking hold of the American people," he said.

"Maybe their present owners will sanctify them," I said. But Finbar was not to be sidetracked.

"The strange thing is," he went on, "that it is among the ministers and preachers themselves that the trend seems to be most pronounced."

"How do you reach that conclusion?"

By way of answer, Finbar picked up the morning paper and opened it to the page on which were listed advertisements of Protestant services for the ensuing Sunday.

"Look at these names," he said.

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"Here's Preston Bradley in one church. Here's Franchion Smith and Crawford Crunch in another. Here's Doctor Deets Dunstan preaching at the Third Reformed Four-square Gospel Tabernacle. If you look closely, you'll see all kinds of first names like Harley and Jewell and Torrey and Stewart, and glory be to God! here's even Doctor Lulubelle Loring, who will unburden herself of some homespun theology to a select congregation next Tuesday night at 8. Do you see it?"

"Yes, I see."

"Now you'll notice, your reverence, there's not a saint's name in the lot of them. It looks as if their parents made a deliberate effort to avoid giving them the names of saints, and these ministers likewise will pass on the tradition to their children, you can be sure of that."

"Oh, I don't know, Finbar," I said. "I see a few cases of John and Edward and Henry here."

"But very few, you'll notice, and especially among the roof-raising type of evangelistic religions. It seems to be almost a fixation with them, and why, that's what I want to know. What's wrong with naming a child after a saint?"

"There's nothing wrong with it, of course," I said, "in fact, it is a rule for Catholic children that they have to have at least one saint's name among those given to them at baptism."

"Of course it is," said Finbar, "and just because it is a Catholic rule, these people will go out of their way to dig up some name like 'Deets,' just to show they don't approve of it."

"Don't be too hard on them," I said. "We may question their choice of names, but we haven't any call to question their sincerity."

"No, I suppose not," said Finbar.

"Now take your own name, for instance," I continued, unable to resist putting a needle into the O'Houlihan vanity "Who knows anything about St. Finbar?"

Mr. O'Houlihan appeared to be shocked and scandalized beyond words.

"May heaven forgive you, Father," he finally said, "if you're not joking and poking fun at me. Surely you with all your book learning have heard of Finbar of Connaught, that learned and holy man who lived in the sixth century, and whose life was one of the glories of good old Ireland."

"Is that so?" I said. "Tell me more."

"Ah, you're pulling my leg, Father. Surely you know that he started a monastery at Lough Eire (you can still see the spot), and that such a vast crowd of disciples flocked out to him that he had the makings of a fine city."

"What city was that? Dublin?"

"Dublin!" said Finbar, with great disgust. "It was Cork, man, fair Cork on the river Lea. If you ever showed such ignorance of St. Finbar on the streets of Cork, you'd be in danger of health and limb, I can tell you. Why the bones of the holy man lie in the cathedral there which goes under his name, and many a fighting man of Cork has drawn strength from kneeling before that selfsame tomb."

"I'm sure they have. Finbar. You've got a good name, and I'm glad to see you're proud of it."

"You bet I am, Father."

"But how are we going to get all our Catholic people to give saint's names to their children?"

"Well," said Finbar, "far be it from me to tell you your business, but you might mention it from the pulpit now and then. I've never heard you do that."

"You shame me, Finbar, but you're

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close to being right."

"Tell the people there's a crowd of good Catholic names to pick from for their children. I've seen books with a couple hundred good Christian names for boys and girls. Tell them when they're picking a name, they ought not to stop with asking themselves: 'Does it sound euphonious?' or 'Will it draw a few dollars out of our rich uncle Crankcase if we name the baby after him?' Let them ask themselves first and foremost, is there a good stout saint in heaven backing up this name; one who had the same name himself, and for that reason will be happy to pray for and protect the child called by the same title."

"As usual, you're right, Finbar. I'll take your words to heart. And I'll tell the people, too, that in every family blessed with children at least one daughter should be named after Mary, the greatest saint of all."

"Do that, Father. And tell them further they ought to know something about the saints they select. Let them find out their feastday and when they lived and how they died. What's the use of having a patron, if you ignore him?"

I said nothing, but saw Mr. O'Houlihan eyeing me.

"While you're at it, Father," he said, "you might call some attention to some great and all but forgotten names, such as Columban and Killian and Gall."

"Who were they?"

"Ah, Father, now I know you're joking. They were saints of old Ireland, as you well know, and I'll take my stand that there are none greater in the calendar."

"Now you're exaggerating," I said.

"Then there's St. Finbar. 'Tis a grand name, and sorely neglected."

And putting on his battered hat, Finbar left me to my meditations.

Sweet Mystery of Life

An unidentified Wall Street statistician, obviously influenced by Shakespeare and Kinsey, offers this seven-fold division of man's relationship with his female counterpart, according to the *Josephinum Review*.

1. Wha-a! I want my mama.
2. G'wan, beat it! We don't want any old girl playing with us.
3. Gee, Alice, you're beautiful!
4. If you don't marry me, I'll shoot myself!
5. All right, go home to your mother and see if I give a darn!
6. She's considerably younger than I am, Alice, I admit, but she sure understands me.
7. Kitchy-kee. Did you hear that, Alice? Listen, she just said: "Grandpa!"

Dialogue

In Montana there is a town named Eurelia. Trainmen differ as to the pronunciation of the name. Passengers are often startled, upon arriving at this station, to hear the conductor yell, "You're a liar: You're a liar." Then from the brakeman, at the other end of the train, comes the cry, "You really are: You really are."



THOUGHTS for the SHUT-IN

Leonard F. Hyland

Charity toward Poor Prisoners

On November second, as every Catholic knows, occurs the commemoration in Catholic liturgy of the church suffering to which Catholic custom has given the name of All Souls' Day. It is meant to be a special day of prayer for those who are atoning in the prison of purgatory for their unremitted venial sins, and for the remains of sin which were upon their souls at the time of their death.

Belief in purgatory goes back to the very beginnings of Christian history, but we are not concerned here with the proofs of its existence. We would rather call the attention of our shut-in readers to the truth taught by the Church regarding our common bond of union with these suffering souls.

According to the striking simile used by St. Paul, all Christian souls, whether in heaven, on earth, or in purgatory, are as closely united as the members of the human body. He terms the union between all these souls the "mystical body of Christ," and teaches quite clearly that we are all interdependent upon each other. Thus a casual prayer said by one of our readers is able to circle the globe and help some soul in darkest Africa; it might reach up into heaven and attract the notice of a saint, who in turn would be able to secure favors from God. Such a prayer can, like a charge of spiritual electricity, penetrate beyond the world into that dark place of exile called purgatory, to relieve the sufferings of souls detained there.

It is this last ability and function that we call to the attention of our shut-in readers this month.

The souls in purgatory are helpless to aid themselves. Their time of meriting is passed; in purgatory, they can only wait for God's justice to be appeased and their souls sufficiently purified to enter heaven.

But God in His mercy enables us who are still on earth to help them by our prayers; nay, we can go so far as to say that God *depends* on us to help them, so that His mercy may admit them sooner into heaven.

Those who are sick and in pain have a special means of performing this act of charity. Let them make a special intention each day this month of the poor souls to offer up their sufferings for this purpose. Let them make a particular effort to be patient. Let them, if they are able, offer up special prayers.

Doing this, they may well be surprised some day to find that their own purgatory is very short because of their charity during life.

Jesus and

Portrait of Christ

The Blind

Bringing together all the references in the Gospels to Our Lord's healing the blind makes this miracle especially significant of His purpose in coming into the world.

Raymond J. Miller

JESUS Christ had a special love for the blind. He worked miracles to cure blindness (at least according to the Gospel record) more often than for any other human affliction.

Four times there are accounts in the Gospel, with specific details, of His curing the blind; and on three other occasions He is described as doing so in a general way.

No other class of human suffering benefited by His miraculous attention, then, like blindness. No other class, that is, save perhaps one. And that is hardly a "human" suffering. Possession by the devil is rather praeter-human, inhuman, diabolical. And the Gospel presents Our Lord as driving the devil (or the devils) out of possessed persons even more often than curing blindness. The total, that is, is greater: a good half dozen general statements that "he drove devils out of many," plus three cases described in full detail. But if we consider only the cases specially described in detail, then the blind still have the lead, even over the possessed: four for the blind, three for the possessed.

The doubt suggests itself here, and we may ask in passing: why is it that there were so many instances of possession in Our Lord's lifetime? Students of the Gospel and theologians are puzzled over the matter, and have

put forward the following surmise: Almighty God permitted that there be an unusual amount of diabolical possession just at this particular time because it would form part, in some way, of the gigantic struggle going on exactly at this time between Jesus Christ and the powers of darkness for the souls of men.

But let us get down to the Gospel record of Our Divine Lord and the blind.

First the "general" cases. St. Luke in his seventh chapter relates that when St. John the Baptist was in prison he sent two of his disciples to Our Lord to ask Him if He was the promised Messiah, or if they were to look for another.

Now it was not because of any doubt on St. John's own part that he sent these envoys to Christ. He knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah; he had recognized Him and pointed Him out to the world before anyone else:

Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.

And this knowledge he had received from God Himself:

There was a man sent by God, whose name was John. . . .

He was to give testimony to the Light.

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He needed, then, no further assurance for himself. But his disciples did need it. Ardently attached to their master John, and the more so now since he was shut up in prison, they had begun to be a little jealous of this new Teacher from Galilee. They wished to cling to the Baptist even after he had pointed out to them the One Whom he had been sent to announce or introduce to the world. They needed some special and striking sign to enable them to transfer their loyalty from John to Jesus (or at least to put Jesus above John in their loyalties).

For that reason he sent them to Our Lord telling them to ask Him pointblank:

Are You the One that is to come,
or shall we look for another?

In other words:

Are You, or are You not, the Messiah?

We hear the Gospel in which this scene occurs read regularly in church, and familiarity tends to make it seem tame and ordinary.

But there was nothing tame and ordinary about a question like this in the Palestine of Our Lord's day. Just the opposite. It was dynamite.

The very atmosphere of that place and time (so we are told even by secular historians) was charged with a tense expectancy of "The One Who was to come," ready to burst into a storm of bloody rebellion the very moment there would be an unmistakable answer to that question. As regards Our Lord's case in particular, the Scribes and Pharisees, His enemies, were avidly waiting for Him to be led to give an answer to some such question, and declare Himself to be the Messiah, so that they might have

cause to arrest Him and put Him to death for blasphemy against God, or for rebellion against the Romans.

Our Lord was truly "the One Who was to come." But He had not come to set off a bloody rebellion, nor to have the people "come to take Him by force and make Him king." His work, the thing for which He had come, was the mysterious and baffling thing of *suffering*. He was to be the suffering Messiah, not the dictator Messiah. As such, He would have to avoid carefully any manifestations which would tend to take Him away from His suffering role — such as well might be involved if here and now He declared Himself openly to John's ambassadors as the Messiah.

On the other hand, even though He was the suffering Messiah, His hour was not yet come; and He must avoid doing or saying anything that would unduly incite His enemies against Him.

John's question, then, posed a serious difficulty for Our Lord. How did He solve it?

He solves it beautifully — by appealing to the blind!

He does not answer yes or no to the question in so many words; but He acts out the answer.

The Prophet Isaiah had foretold (and the Jews knew it well) that the coming Messiah would identify Himself in one prominent way by His compassionate healing of the blind:

Say to the fainthearted: Take courage;
God Himself will come and save you.
Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,
and the ears of the deaf
shall be unstopped. Then shall the
lame man leap as the hart,
and the tongue of the dumb shall be free.

So Jesus appeals to the blind. In-

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stead of giving His answer in so many words: "You have said it; I am He!" (for this He was to do later, on Holy Thursday night, when His hour would be come), He now answers mainly by His actions.

In that same hour He cured many of their diseases,
and injuries, and evil spirits;
and to many that were blind He gave sight.

And answering, He said to them (i.e., to John's envoys):

Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen:

The blind see;
the lame walk; the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise;
the Gospel is preached to the poor.

And blessed is he, whoever he may be,
that shall not be scandalized in Me.

Just as the Prophet Isaías had foretold, Jesus the Messiah heals "many blind," and many other sick persons. Then He turns to the messengers of St. John and tells them (in effect):

Go and tell John that you have heard
and seen the fulfillment
of the prophecy of Isaías regarding the
Messias.

With this answer to John's question, half acted out and half spoken, Our divine Lord had found the perfect solution of an extremely difficult situation.

To every Jew who knew the Scriptures about the Messiah the answer was unmistakably plain; and yet it was given in such a way — centering as it did around the helpless and poor of this world, the blind, lame, lepers and the rest — that it gave no encouragement to any spirit of violence

and sudden striving for earthly glory. To the Pharisees it gave no occasion for stating their hatred of Christ; for even though they above all others perceived the meaning of His divine "appeal to the blind," they hardly dared arrest a Man Who was making Himself so beloved, by His miracles, to the ordinary people.

But what is the meaning of Our Lord's strange concluding phrase:

Blessed is he, whoever he may be,
that shall not be scandalized in Me.

Where or how does this warning (for it does seem to be a kind of warning) fit in with the rest of this particular incident? The answer is that it has a special application to all the persons concerned: the ordinary people eager to go to war for a military Messiah; the Pharisees watching for a way to destroy Christ; even St. John the Baptist, or at least his disciples, who were wondering why the Messiah was so slow in getting down to the work of inaugurating "the Kingdom of God."

To the ordinary people it meant: Do not be deceived into thinking that I have come to bring you an earthly kingdom, to be won by bloody rebellion. To the Pharisees: do not let yourselves be deceived about Me as your Messiah because I fail to adopt your way of thinking, or because I refuse to give My approval to your hypocrisy. And to St. John and His disciples: what did it mean to them?

Some commentators offer the suggestion that St. John himself was beginning to grow impatient because Our Lord had not been more quick and energetic in asserting that He was the Messiah. But this hardly seems possible of St. John. He was Christ's one and only precursor; his birth had been miraculous and announced by

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an angel; He had been called "great" by the Holy Ghost in the Bible before he was born, and was praised by Jesus Christ as the greatest man ever born.

No, it was John's disciples, not their Master, who needed Christ's warning not to be scandalized. To them it meant: Do not be deceived into thinking that I am not the Messiah because I fail to move as quickly as you, with your human way of judging, might desire.

No; tell John what you have seen: *the blind see*. The blind who see by My power prove that I am the Messiah, regardless of your human disappointments about Me. Do not become blind yourselves by giving in to these disappointments, but trust Me; trust Me that in God's good time, and Mine, I shall complete the work which My Father has given Me to do; that the day will come when I shall be able to say of that work:

It is consummated;

when, I, being lifted up,

shall draw all things to Myself,

and like the true Messiah, shall make Myself known to the world as

the Light which enlightens every man coming into this world.

So much for the first general mention of Our Lord's curing the blind. It is particularly significant because of its unusual setting and application, and hence we have spoken somewhat at length about it.

Now something a little more brief about the other two "general" references in the Gospel to cures of the blind by Christ.

Toward the end of St. Matthew's

fourteenth chapter, just before the incident of the second multiplication of the loaves, there is this passage:

He (Jesus) went up a mountain and seated Himself there.

And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them the lame, *the blind*, the deaf, the crippled, and many besides; and He healed them.

And the crowds were amazed to see the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see; and they glorified the God of Israel.

This took place outside Galilee, across the Sea of Tiberias to the east, in the pagan territory of Decapolis, not far from the Land of the Garasens, where not long before Our Lord had driven a legion of devils out of two poor men.

There are two points of special interest in this series of miracles: one is the fact that by way of exception Our Divine Lord was here working miracles for pagans, and not for Jews; and the second is the possibility of a connection between these miracles and the healing of the possessed men of the Garasens.

Commentators on the Gospel find indications that the people cured on this occasion were really pagans and not Jews, from the following clues: The territory itself was really pagan, and not Jewish; the crowds seem particularly surprised and "amazed" by the miracles, as though it was a new experience for them (whereas Our Lord was by that time a familiar wonder-worker in the land of the Jews); and when the healing had been done by Our Lord, the crowds "glorified the God of Israel" as though the God of Israel was not their own God.

It is surprising in another way,

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however, to find Our Lord working miracles here. A very short time before he had been asked by a pagan woman — the Syro-Phenician woman with the daughter possessed by the devil, as we hear in one of the Sunday Gospels — to cure her daughter; and He had refused, saying:

I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And it was only the woman's persistent faith that finally made Him yield and grant her, as it were, an exception to this rule.

But if it was His rule not to work miracles for non-Jews, why is He so ready to cure all these non-Jews, including our blind non-Jews, in the land of Decapolis?

It is one of the mysteries of His divine freedom. He is the supreme Lawgiver; and He dispenses when and as He will from the laws that He has made. But one fairly obvious explanation here might be found in what He was to say about these pagan crowds almost as soon as the miracle-working was done:

Jesus calling together His disciples said:
I have compassion on the crowds.

And then He went on to work the miracle of the second multiplication of the loaves. It was this same divine compassion, in other words, which had moved Him in the first place to make an exception in His general ruling and cure the blind and the rest of the afflicted, even though they were not Jews but pagans.

The other special point about this curing of the blind and their unfortunate companions in suffering is its relation to the driving out of the devils from the two men of the Garasens.

They had been fierce, wild creatures, these men, before Our Lord freed them; but when it was over, and Jesus was about to take ship back to Galilee across the lake, St. Mark says:

When He (Jesus) had got into the boat, the man who had been troubled with the devil began to beg Him that he might go with Him.

And He would not allow him, but said to him:

Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you. So he went off, and began to publish in Decapolis the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone marveled.

Surely then it will not be out of place to surmise that among the pagan blind and afflicted who came to Jesus to be cured on this occasion there were some from the Land of Garasens; and that this former demoniac was one of the leaders of the "Garasen pilgrimage," now exercising the apostolate Our Lord had imposed upon him, and bringing to His feet the blind and crippled from his own country; and incidentally once more offering his gratitude and praise to Jesus for his own cure.

The third general mention of blind persons cured by Our Lord comes in St. Matthew's twenty-first chapter, verse fourteen. It was the day after Palm Sunday in Jerusalem:

There came to Him the blind and the lame in the temple;
and He healed them.

"There came": but the blind and the lame cannot come by themselves. Someone must have led them. And perhaps it was Restitutus who led them to Our Lord.

Happenings in Rome

Monthly round-up of significant events in the capital of Christendom.

Christopher McEnniry

Teen-aged Saint:

To be a saint one must be a hero. Nobody is named a saint until he has been proved a hero. Even a teen-ager can be a hero, and a saint. That was proved in the case of St. Dominic Savio. When his name was proposed for canonization, the tribunal of hard-headed, objectively-minded judges looked over the testimony and were about to throw out the case. He was a good boy, granted, but that did not make him a hero. But when they went deeper into the evidence, they were forced to admit that nobody, young or old, could have practiced such love for God and for the neighbor as did the teen-ager Dominic Savio unless he were a hero.

On the occasion of the canonization the Pope said that the young saint, Dominic Savio, learned from the old saint, Don Bosco, that the joy of loving God and of making him loved by others could become a noble apostolate. He induced a few of his chums to join him in what they called "The Company of the Immaculate Conception." Their purpose was to advance with giant strides in the way of holiness and to avoid even the slightest sin. He urged on his school companions to the practice of piety, good behavior, the frequentation of the sacraments, the recitation of the rosary, the avoidance of sin and of the occasions of sin. Undismayed by insolence or rebuffs, he persisted in his firm but prudent and kindly efforts to bring back to a sense of duty the unruly and the perverse. Then the Pope concluded: "Rewarded already in this life

by the familiarity and the divine gifts of Jesus Christ, the Guest of his soul, he speedily passed from this world to receive, through the intercession of his Heavenly Queen, the recompense of his filial love."

Christian Labor Unions:

Fifty years ago the labor unions in Belgium, dominated by Masonic influence, followed principles and practices that a Christian worker could not go along with. The Belgian Catholics did not go along. Neither did they sit on the sidelines and sulk. They founded their own Christian Federation of Labor. Today it embraces nearly half of the labor union men of the country. Its avowed purpose is "to introduce into the labor world an order more conformable to the ideals of Christ."

While celebrating their fiftieth anniversary, they voted unanimously to send "an address of homage to the Supreme Pontiff." The Pope, through his Vice-Secretary of State, sent a warm response. He praised the founders of the organization, "those humble workers, who, even to their own financial loss, refused to join anti-religious labor unions, but established their own federation, which has had such success. By fidelity to the Christian ideal your predecessors, with courage and self-sacrifice, have succeeded during this half-century in bettering the lot of the worker, in winning respect for the human personality and in taking their rightful place in the economy of the country."

"The prime purpose of a workers'

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union," the Pope insisted, "is to present and defend the legitimate interests of the worker. The elected officers should have no other purpose than to promote the welfare of the companions who entrusted them with their office, to promote the welfare of their companions, within the framework of the common good and the national economy."

Since the Federation was formed to introduce into the labor world the ideals of Christ, the Pope urged all the members to be true followers of Christ and to take part in the retreats conducted by their chaplains where they will learn to know Christ. They should look less to increase of numbers than to the solid Christian formation of the members already enrolled.

Radiologists in Rome:

The Pope was not able to receive the members of the International Congress of Medical Radiology of the Latin Countries. He did, however, from his sick bed, send a letter, copies of which were distributed to all the participants.

He summed up the list of their achievements. Then, with deep human understanding, he offered his sympathy to those who, after a lifetime of research, found their theories untenable. Meeting with their confreres from other lands, striking up lasting friendships, with resultant correspondence and cooperation, would still lead to glorious successes.

You must be struck, he said, by the ease with which Our Saviour cured persons afflicted with the most hopeless maladies and sent them away healthy in soul as well as in body. So too you will always be mindful that

you are treating human beings, your own brothers, and while striving to mitigate their sufferings during this short life, you will help and encourage them to reach, in the other world, that glorious life which will never end.

Mary in Atlantic City:

Even the papers of Rome described the Marian demonstration at Atlantic City, in the largest hall in the world. "Perhaps never in the history of mankind were so many people gathered together under one roof to assist at the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass and to honor the Blessed Mother of God," said Bishop Eustace. And he concluded: "Today, my faithful children, I have seen the most beautiful sight of my earthly life. Now I am content to die." Before placing the crown on the head of the statue, the elected "Queen" paused for a brief moment while the vast audience waited. She took her handkerchief to wipe away the tears flowing down her cheeks. Seventy thousand people joined her in weeping for joy.

Tito-Type Freedom:

We still hear of Marshal Tito and of his "freedom of religion." His constant endeavor is to lure priests to apostatize and to form a "Jugo-Slav Catholic Church" that will fit in with atheistic communism. On one occasion he summoned a group of priests and said to them: "We have broken off from Moscow; why don't you break off from Rome?"

The Bishop of Hvar has just been arrested and fined 40,000 Dinari "for abusing religion by interfering with politics." His crime was opposing a group of these apostate priests.

Willingness without action is like a cloud without rain; there may be lots of thunder and lightning, but no parched ground is watered.

—Quote



Sideglances

These will be the bystander's thoughts on a subject about which many people have been thinking, writing, arguing worriedly in recent months. It is the subject of juvenile delinquency, as it has been brought to the fore by assorted thrill murders, cruelties, burglaries and crimes of rape committed by teen-agers that have been making frightening headlines. To find out how bad the situation is, court reporters, judges, social workers and the police have gone to their files to come up with the horrible fact that, of some nineteen million youngsters between the ages of ten and eighteen, more than a million are in some sort of trouble with the police each year. Everybody wants to know what's wrong, but the ones who are especially concerned are the parents themselves. They are the ones who feel most disgraced when a son or daughter has to be taken in hand by the police. They are also the ones who are usually (not always) mostly to blame. This is how the bystander sees their blame.

There is a truth at the bottom of all juvenile delinquency that will never get much play in the newspapers or popular and serious secular magazines but which throws more light on the subject than a hundred books could do. It is the truth that all human beings are born with tendencies to evil as a result of original sin, which tendencies can be offset or rather smothered and replaced with habits of virtue only *through the merits, the example, the grace of Jesus Christ*. Now no child is going to learn about Christ, and find access to His merits, and come to be influenced by His example and words, by itself alone. It comes

to know Christ, to be influenced by Christ, to be fortified and recreated by Christ, only through its parents, and through the Church and school to which they introduce it. The parents are the key. They are the ones who must have been transformed themselves by Christ to make Christ mean anything to their children. They are the ones who must be convinced, like St. Paul, that there is another law than the law of God fighting in the members of their children, from which they can be delivered only "through Christ Jesus, their crucified Lord."

Starting with this unanswerable premise, one can find deeper explanations of juvenile delinquency than the sociologist and criminologists glibly give. One of the common explanations given is the lack of real parental love for children. Now real parental love can be learned only from the example of Christ, and practiced only by the grace of Christ. Without Christ, the other law in the members of parents, that fights against the law of God, is bound to be stronger than the unselfish parental love that children need. As one sociologist phrases the reasons for delinquency, "the biggest trouble is that there doesn't seem to be enough love to go around any more. There's too much divorce, too few normal homes. So what can you expect from the kids?" Divorce is a big thing and a widespread thing depriving children of the love they need. But there are other things. Even in many homes that seem solidly safe from divorce, there is birth-control snuffing out love.

There is a close relationship between the

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practice of birth-control and juvenile delinquency. It works like this. Children have to be wanted and loved for their own sake and for the sake of God Who wants them to be born and led toward heaven. A couple may say, "we want two children but no more." After the two are born, they settle down to planning, scheming, using unnatural stratagems and mechanisms to make sure no more children are born. The thought of a third child becomes increasingly horrible; it would interfere with so many material plans and bodily comforts. Almost invariably this resentment against a possible third or fourth child in some way manifests itself against the actual two or three that have already been born. The successful practice of birth-prevention makes a parent inevitably think, when the children they have make sacrifices necessary, "if only we had started this birth-prevention earlier; if only we didn't have these two to worry about." Then, in word or in action, by negligence or by omission, they will be saying to their children: "I wish you had never been born." Right there is where the child gets its first start toward delinquency. If it is not wanted at home, it will join a gang where it is wanted, or make its presence in the world felt in some way, even though it be criminal. But the whole process starts with the parents' refusal to accept Christ's laws of marriage, and to imitate the love with which He loved all the world.

Sometimes birth-control does not lead to expressions of resentment, on the part of parents toward their children already born, but to a different potential cause of delinquency. It leads to the spoiling of the one or two children that they have. They started out in marriage with this in mind: "We'll have only two children, so that we can give them the best of everything." Subconsciously realizing that they should have more children, they compensate for not having them by lavishing excessive com-

forts and selfish gratifications on the ones they have. They try to save them from every conceivable sacrifice or discipline. This works out hardly better than the mistake of showing resentment to children because they have come into the world. The spoiled child at home is usually the bully outside the home, and very often the one who, when the world does not treat it as its doting mother and father do, turns anti-social and criminal. Again, the parents were not Christians themselves; they gave nothing of Christ to their child, even though they gave it every conceivable material luxury. The end was not too surprising.

While parents are the first and most important transmitters of a knowledge of Christ and the grace of Christ to their children, they must be helped in this by the school in which the children receive their education. That is why instructed Catholics just cannot feel otherwise than that public schools are inadequate for their children. They are convinced that the job of smothering the evil tendencies resulting from original sin in their children is an unceasing job; and that the task of keeping their children in contact with Christ, Who alone can smother those tendencies, must be shared with them by the school. They feel sorry for children who hear nothing about Christ either at home or in school; who, in the whole process of their upbringing, are never given free and full access to the transforming power of Jesus Christ. There is no bitterness or opposition toward public schools in this; there is only devotion to a great historic and theological truth, that Christ is the only way and the only truth and the only life, and that those who do not follow Him are bound to walk in darkness.

Thus, while the world thrashes about seeking the solution to the problem of juvenile delinquency, it misses entirely the explanation given in advance by God. Many of

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the same voices that bewail the lack of true parental love in homes, promote the sins of divorce with remarriage and birth-control, which destroy parental love, as if they were boons to society. Many of the voices that attribute juvenile delinquency to bad comic books, TV shows of violence and crime, and over sensationalizing of criminals in general, speak with scorn, or at least agnosticism and disbelief of Christ and the truths He made so plain to the world. If

you are a parent reading these lines, clutch to your heart this truth as the only real safeguard against delinquency in your children: Your child needs Christ, as exemplified in your obedience to His laws and imitation of His love; as taught by your life and by the teachers to whom you entrust it; as present in the tabernacle of every Catholic Church and imparting His own divine strength and life through the sacraments He gave to the world.

Mary's Baptism

A Catholic girl, deeply informed in and with the faith, was a sponsor recently at the baptism of an infant. Her reaction is worthy of passing on to our readers.

"The baptism was at 2, and Mary (the infant) didn't take well to the fussing attendant upon getting her ready for the big event — the fancy baptismal dress, the layers of blankets and finally, the last straw — the sweet little bonnet that was supposed to make her look like the angel she was going to be. I don't know that I blamed her, and I could just imagine her saying, 'Listen, I'm perfectly comfortable in my nightgown and diaper. What's the big idea of all this paraphernalia?' By the time we got to church she had become accustomed to the idea a little bit, but when I took hold of her I guess she could tell I was an inexperienced hand at this baby business. My fumbling efforts to undo all the trappings around her neck so the priest could anoint her really loosened up her throat. There were four other babies being baptized, and it seemed that they looked reproachfully at Mary, one or the other even letting out a little 'tsk, tsk' for her benefit. But the devil took a hand at that point and egged her on to an even louder complaint at the very thought of renouncing Satan and all his works and pomps, and all the bouncing and shushing in the world had no effect whatsoever. Father had no difficulty putting the salt in her mouth — she was in perfect position for that ceremony. After the baptism, she quieted down like a charm and even gave me a little smile (probably gas pains) as much as to say — 'Well, it's wonderful to be a Christian after all, isn't it?' I carried her out of the church very carefully, for it dawned on me suddenly that I had in my hands a most precious burden."

Doubtful Compliment

The prisoner was about to be freed and the chaplain was giving him some good advice.

"My good man," he said, "try to remember what I said in my sermon last Sunday and make up your mind never to return to this place."

The prisoner, deeply moved, shook the priest's hand and replied:

"Father, no man who ever heard you preach would want to come back here."



Catholic Anecdotes

Modern Samaritan

Rarely indeed is an act of kindness ever forgotten. Often it comes back to the giver even in this world, as it did to Pilot F. J. Riordan as related in the *Morning Star*.

Mr. Riordan was driving home one evening in his car when he saw the prone form of a Negro farmer lying near the road. The cars ahead of him had just slowed down enough to avoid running over the man. After all, why should anyone bother himself with a man who was intoxicated and asleep. Yet Riordan did. He pulled up close to the figure, got out amid the curses of the drivers behind him and lifted up the Negro farmer, who had a wound on his head. Giving what first-aid he could, Riordan called for an ambulance and had the man removed to a hospital.

Months passed by. The good samaritan was piloting his plane over this same area when the engines gave out. He knew that he was crashing into the woods below. When he regained consciousness he was hanging from a jagged sheet of steel that had cut into his legs. Someone was holding him up, thus preventing the steel from severing his legs completely. He was thus supported for more than an hour until the ambulance arrived. And the good samaritan this time was none other than the Negro whom Pilot Riordan had helped three months previously.

Approach

A missionary priest whom we will call "Big Father Tim" was speaking

with another priest in his office about a pile of small rocks on his desk.

"Do you know what I'm going to do with them?" asked Father Tim. "There's an old miner I met who's been away from the sacraments for over fifty years. I can't seem to reach him. But over in Death Valley recently I picked up these rocks in the hills back of Scotty's Castle. I don't think they're worth a thing, but I'll take them over to old Tim and ask him about them — get him to assay them. He'll take me for a fool perhaps. But from talking about the search for gold I can get to talking about the gold of God's grace and mercy."

Boomerang

The story of a joke that backfired in the direction of heaven is related in the Australian *Voice of Fatima*.

A group of non-Catholic women who held a bridge party during the past summer awarded a Baltimore penny catechism as a "booby" prize. It was given as a joke and there was much laughing and some scoffing by all except the young lady who received it. She took it home and more out of curiosity than anything else, started to read it, finding to her surprise, that the more she read, the more interested she became. Finally, after some time she asked for instructions and was received into the Catholic Church. But this was not the end of the story. Later on, through the example of her exemplary living, five of her close relatives and friends entered the Church.

Pointed Paragraphs



Poor and Poorest

There are two kinds of souls that should be thought of and assisted during the month of November. We like to call them the poor and the poorest souls.

The poor souls are those who are languishing in purgatory, suffering, it is true, but with the knowledge that, when the full atonement for the remains of their sins has been made, they will be admitted to the rapture of heaven.

The poorest souls are those who are still living on earth, but living in the voluntary state or habit of serious sin. Among them are all the Catholics who are living in bad marriages; all the husbands and wives who refuse to give up habitual sins against marriage; all the individuals who have been away from the sacraments for years or who have been receiving the sacraments sacrilegiously for years with no intention of returning to God. They are the poorest souls because if death catches up with them as they are now, they shall be lost to God and to happiness forever.

The poor souls in purgatory can be helped very easily, by remembrances at Mass, by indulgenced prayers, by mortifications offered up to take the place of the suffering they owe to God.

It is not so easy to help the poorest souls. Prayers must be offered up for them, and sacrifices made for them,

as Our Lady revealed to the children at Fatima. But they must also be reminded of their fearful state; they must be warned of the terrible meaning of death for them in their present condition; they must be shown the mercy of God waiting for them now, in confessionals and at altar railings, before it is too late.

All Catholics in the state of grace should have a great pity for these poorest souls, and a great eagerness to help them. But especially their close relatives and friends, those on whom they rely for earthly comforts and goods, should watch for opportunities to remind them of the supreme good that they have lost, to regain which any sacrifice is insignificant.

Thanksgiving

To Americans Thanksgiving day can mean many things.

It can mean turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes and mince pie. And that is all. Food for the stomach. Thanksgiving day is simply a day for the appetite.

For others it can mean giving thanks with the lips, that is, saying, "Thanks, Lord, for all that you've done for me during the past year," and letting it go at that. Words come cheap. Anybody with a tongue can use them prodigally. God said, "Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven." So, not everyone who says, "Thanks, Lord," and does not prove his thanks in action, will have his thanks received in heaven.

The real thanks is that which comes from the heart. It is made up of many ingredients besides just words. It has within it sorrow for having been ungrateful in the past, for having taken God's goodness and kindness for granted, almost as though one had a

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right to these free-will gifts. It has within it resolution for the future, resolution to be humble and reverent always because of God's care and watchfulness and generosity.

The thanks that comes from the heart is like the love that lives in the heart. Neither is content to be quiescent. Each is proved by action. Each proves its sincerity and its depth by doing things for the one who is loved and for the one to whom thanks are due.

The best way in which a Catholic can celebrate Thanksgiving day, at least the best way in which he can *begin* Thanksgiving day, is by going to Mass and Holy Communion. He can never be nearer to God than he is then. And never will God be more ready to accept his thanks.

Only after giving real thanks for favors received can one truly enjoy the Thanksgiving dinner.

The Cure for Secularism

There is much talk these days about the secularization of life, particularly of American life. The things of life are put into separate compartments. Business goes into one compartment, rest and relaxation into another, God and religion into a third. And there is not and should not be any connection between the compartments.

Thus, a man who sells rotten books in his drug store can go to church very piously on Sunday and act as a very respectable member of the community. The truth of the matter is that he is a corrupter of morals, a poisoner of the souls of youth, a menace to all society. Thus, the woman who takes the lead in the immoral motion picture, *The French Line*, is said by her publicity agent to be a very religious person, "a deeply religious girl." If this woman is a deeply

religious girl, then morality in the movies has nothing to do with religion.

It is possible that these people feel quite justified in what they are doing. Entertainment is one thing; religion is another. There is no connection between the two.

Men of all religions, men in government, men in the arts and sciences are deprecating this evil of the separation of the natural and the supernatural. One wonders who the secularists are in view of the fact that even people whom one would suppose to be irreligious are currently crying out against irreligion.

However, as far as we know, there is only one institution that is doing something practical about secularism. That institution is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is multiplying her schools. Philadelphia is planning 58 new schools; Pittsburgh, 11; San Francisco, 5; and so on throughout the country. The Church believes that only through a thorough grounding in religion from earliest youth onwards can the evil of secularism be destroyed. She is working for the future. When these children, the products of the Catholic schools, grow up to be men and women, they will have an entirely different outlook on life than many of those who went before them. It is hoped that they will keep God where He belongs — intimately connected with all the affairs of man.

"Hot Potato"

Far too many letters have been received taking issue with our stand on the right-to-work laws (quite a number with cancellations of a subscription) to be reproduced in the Readers Retort column. Some of them are long enough to fill by themselves the four

or five pages we usually devote to the letters of readers.

Even here there is room only for a few notes concerning the tenor of these letters. But we do want to point out the more important features that they have in common.

One letter says in so many words, and many others imply, that the completely devastating answer to our opposition to the right-to-work laws is to be found in the daily newspapers. "Don't you ever read the newspapers?" "Don't the newspapers prove that the greatest evil in the land today is that of the unions?"

Now we have a high regard for newspaper editors and publishers. We know they are trying to do a good job, and that they represent one of the greatest proofs of the real freedom of America.

But the newspapers are not the Gospel. They are not infallible interpreters of right and wrong. The truth is that they are often mis-interpreters of situations for the simple reason that they feature wrong-doing as newsworthy and right-doing as too commonplace to be worthy of space. Thus one union leader caught racketeering will be news; a thousand union leaders peacefully cooperating with employers will be given no mention. Simple-minded readers of newspapers see little in them about unions except stories of abuses; they draw the conclusion that there is nothing but abuse in the union movement.

Another thing about the letters we have received is that many of them frankly state that it is a better thing for workingmen to be free to bargain with employers for non-living or less-

than-subsistence wages, than for them to be burdened with the duty of joining a union for the sake of getting better, even living wages. This thought is expressed in a dozen different ways. It is propaganda that has planted it in so many minds. So few seem to realize that it comes down to this: Freedom to starve, or to live on oaten meal and rice in a slums, is more desirable than any semblance of obligation to join a union and thus have some opportunity of improving one's living condition.

Our reader states simply: "Unions are in no way responsible for the betterment of the lot of workingmen. All the benefits labor has achieved in the past fifty years and more would have been granted by employers had there never been a union to ask for them." Who can argue calmly or intelligently with one who makes such a statement?

Tribute

Acting on the idea of a Catholic friend, Mrs. Velma Miller, regional director of the Ohio Association of Garden Clubs, a non-Catholic, has suggested that a white rose be named in honor of Our Lady as a Marian Year tribute to the Mother of God. She took the matter up with a leading rose-growing firm that wasn't even sure what the Marian Year was all about. "Imagine me, a Protestant, telling another non-Catholic about the Blessed Virgin," said Mrs. Miller.

She finally succeeded in getting the firm's promise to develop a sturdy white rose in honor of Our Lady, and to make it available to all gardeners as a perpetual memory of the Marian Year.

Scientists have invented an earthquake detector that goes off like an alarm clock. What is really needed is an alarm clock that goes off like an earthquake.



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EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

Selected and Edited by John Schaefer

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER III

CHARITY ENVIETH NOT

The soul that loves Jesus Christ does not envy the great ones of this world, but only those who are greater lovers of Jesus Christ. St. Gregory explains this next characteristic of charity by saying that, as charity despises all earthly greatness, it cannot possibly provoke her envy.

Hence, we must distinguish two kinds of envy, one evil, and the other holy. The evil type of envy is that which envies and murmurs at the worldly goods possessed by others on this earth. But holy envy, far from wishing to be like the great ones of the world, rather compassionates them for living in the midst of honors and earthly pleasures. It seeks and desires God alone, and has no other aim than that of loving Him as much as possible. Such a soul has a pious envy of those who love Him more than she does, for she would, if possible, surpass even the Seraphim in loving Him.

This is the sole purpose of pious souls on earth, a purpose which so charms and ravishes the heart of God with love that it causes Him to say: "Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister; My spouse, thou hast wounded My heart with one of thy eyes." (Cant. 4:9) By "one of thy eyes" is meant that one purpose which the espoused soul has in all her devotions and thoughts, namely to please Almighty God. Men of the world look on things with many eyes, that is, they have several purposes in their actions:

as, for instance, to please others, to become honored, to obtain riches, and, if nothing else, at least to please themselves. But the saints have but a single eye, with which they keep in view, in all that they do, the pleasure of God alone. "Let the rich," said St. Paulinus, "enjoy their riches; let the kings enjoy their kingdoms; Thou, O Christ, art my treasure and my kingdom."

Here we must remark that we must not only perform good works, but we must perform them well. In order that our works may be good and perfect, they must be done with the sole purpose of pleasing God. Many actions may in themselves be praise-worthy, but from being performed for some other purpose than for the glory of God they are of little or no value in His sight. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said: "God rewards our actions by the weight of pure intention." This was as much as to say that, according as our intention is pure, so does the Lord accept and reward our actions.

But, O God, how difficult it is to find an action performed solely for Thee! I remember a holy old man, a religious, who had labored much in the service of God, and died with the reputation of sanctity. One day, as he cast a glance back at his past life, he said to me in a tone of sadness and fear: "Woe is me! When I consider all the actions of my past life, I do not find one done entirely for God."

Oh, this accursed self-love, that makes us lose all or the greater part of the fruit of our good actions! How many in their most holy employments, such as preaching, hearing confessions, giving missions, labor and exert themselves to the limit, and gain little or nothing because they do not regard God alone, but worldly honor, or self-interest, or the vanity of making an appearance, or at least their own inclination!

Our Lord has said: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. 6:1) He who works for his own gratification has already received his wages, indeed, which dwindle into a little smoke, or the pleasure of a day that quickly vanishes and confers no benefit on the soul. The prophet Aggeus said that whoever labors for anything else than to please God puts his reward in a sack full of holes, which, when he comes to open it, he finds entirely empty. Hence it is that such persons, failing to obtain the object which they had in mind, are thrown into distress and confusion. This is a sign that they had not in view the glory of God alone. For he who undertakes a thing solely for the glory of God is not troubled at all, even though his undertaking should fail. For, in truth, by working with a pure intention, he has already gained his object, which was to please Almighty God.

The following are a number of signs which indicate whether we work solely for God in any spiritual undertaking. 1) If we are not disturbed at the failure of our plans, for when we realize that it is not God's will, neither is it any longer our will. 2) If we rejoice at the good done by others as

heartily as if we ourselves had done it. 3) If we have no preference for one charge more than for another, but willingly accept that which obedience to superiors enjoins on us. 4) If after our actions we do not seek the thanks or approbation of others, nor are in any way affected if we be criticized or scolded, being satisfied with pleasing God. If, when the world applauds us, we are not puffed up, but meet the vain glory, which makes itself felt, with the reply of the venerable John of Avila: "Go away, you come too late, for all has already been given to God."

If it falls to our lot to do something pleasing to God, what more, asks St. John Chrysostom, can we desire? "If you are found worthy of performing something that pleases God, do you seek other recompense than this?" The greatest reward, the brightest fortune that can befall a creature, is to give pleasure to his Creator.

This is what Jesus Christ looks for from a soul that loves Him. "Put me," He says, "as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm." (Cant. 8:6) He desires us to place Him as a seal on our heart and on our arm: on our heart that, whatever we intend to do, we might direct it solely to the love of God; on our arm that, whatever we do, all may be done to please God. Thus God is the sole end of all our thoughts and of all our actions. St. Teresa said that he who would become a saint must live free from every other desire than that of pleasing God.

Purity of intention is called the heavenly alchemy by which iron is turned into gold: that is to say, the most trivial actions (such as to work, to take one's meals, to take recreation or to rest), when done for God, become the gold of holy love. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, therefore, con-

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tended that those who do all with a pure intention go straight to heaven, without passing through purgatory. The story is told of a pious hermit who, before beginning any work, was accustomed to pause a while, and lift his eyes to heaven. On being questioned why he did so, he replied: "I am taking aim." By this he meant that, as the archer, before shooting his arrow, takes his aim that he may not miss the mark, so before each action he made God his aim, that it might be sure of pleasing Him. We should do the same. And even during the performance of our actions, it is very good for us from time to time to renew our good intention.

Those who have nothing else in view in their undertakings than the divine will, enjoy that holy liberty of spirit which belongs to the children of God. It enables them to embrace everything that pleases Jesus Christ, no matter how revolting it may be to their own sensibilities or human respect. The love of Jesus Christ establishes His lovers in a state of total indifference, so that all is the same to them, be it bitter or sweet. They desire nothing for their own pleasure, but all for the pleasure of God. With the same feelings of peace, they take up small and great works, pleasant and unpleasant. It is enough for them that they please God.

On the other hand, many are willing to serve God, but it must be in such an employment, in such a place, with certain companies or under certain circumstances, or they either quit the work, or do it with resentment.

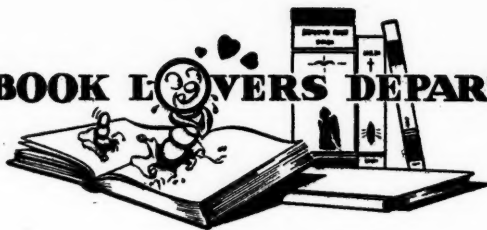
Such persons have not freedom of spirit, but are slaves of self-love. They, therefore, gain little merit from their deeds and lead a troubled life, because the yoke of Jesus Christ becomes a burden to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ care only to do what pleases Him, for the reason that it pleases Him, when He wills, and where He wills, and in the manner He wills, and whether He wishes to employ them in a state of life honored by the world, or in a life of obscurity and insignificance. This is what is meant by loving Jesus Christ with a pure love. And in this we ought to train ourselves, resisting the desires of our self-love, which would incline us to seek important and honorable functions, and such as suit our pleasures.

Moreover, we must be detached from all exercises, even spiritual ones, when the Lord wishes us to be occupied in other works of His good pleasure. Father Alvarez, one day finding himself overwhelmed with business, was anxious to free himself from it, in order to go and pray. For it seemed to him that during that time he was not with God. But our Lord said to him: "Though I do not keep you with Me, let it suffice that I make use of you." This is a profitable lesson for those who are sometimes disturbed at being obliged by obedience or charity to leave their accustomed devotions. Let them be assured that such disturbances do not come from God, but either from the devil or from self-love. "Give pleasure to God, and die." This is the grand maxim of the saints.

Childishness Toward God

New rules set down for writers in the Polish communist press call for spelling God with a small "g". The innovation first appeared in the principal daily of the communist party in Poland. The paper studiously tries to avoid the mention of God, but when He is mentioned, it is with small letters.

BOOK LOVERS DEPARTMENT



Conducted by Thomas Tobin

CATHOLIC AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Archibald Joseph Cronin, M. D. 1896 —

NOVELIST

I. Life:

Archibald Joseph Cronin, better known to thousands of readers as A. J., was born in Cardoss, Scotland, on July 19th, 1896, the son of Patrick and Jessie Montgomerie Cronin. Cronin received his early education from the village school and Dunbarton Academy. In 1914 he entered Glasgow University to prepare for a medical career, but he interrupted his studies to serve in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve during World War I. After his service in the Navy he returned to the University and graduated in medicine in 1919. Soon after graduation Doctor Cronin sailed to India as ship surgeon. In 1921 he married Agnes Mary Gibson who was also a physician and three children have been born of this marriage. The first four years of practice were spent in South Wales until 1924 when Doctor Cronin was appointed medical inspector for mines in Great Britain. He built up a fine practice in London's fashionable West End from 1926 until 1930 when his health broke down and he went to a Scottish farm to recuperate. Since that time he has never returned to the active practice of medicine, but has devoted his talents to the writing of popular novels. A. J. Cronin served in the United States as a member of the British Ministry of Information from 1941 until 1945. Cronin has since returned to the United States and now lives at New Canaan,

Connecticut.

II. Writings:

All during his life Cronin has been interested in literature, but it was the period of recuperation that enabled him to devote his time to writing. In 1931 his first book, *Hatter's Castle*, was accepted as the selection of the English Book Society. *Hatter's Castle* is the psychological study of the downfall of a man beset with tremendous vanity. After his first book Cronin published other novels at regular intervals: *Three Loves*, *Grand Canary*, *The Stars Look Down*, *The Citadel*, *Shannon's Way* and *The Spanish Gardener*. *Adventures in Two Worlds* is an autobiographical piece. The publishing of the book, *The Keys of The Kingdom*, made him and the hero, Father Chisholm, very controversial figures in Catholic circles, as many critics found Father Chisholm not quite orthodox.

III. The Book:

One of Cronin's best novels is *The Green Years*, the story of an Irish orphan boy who grows up in a dour Scottish household. The young Catholic boy finds the struggle to preserve his religion in such circumstances very difficult. Cronin is at his best in this wistful tale of the young orphan.

NOVEMBER BOOK REVIEWS

Books reviewed here, or other books, if not available in local book stores, may be ordered from The Liguorian Pamphlet Office, Liguori, Missouri.

MARIAN BOOKS

Mary in Doctrine. By Emil Neubert, S.M., S.T.D. 257 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$4.25.

The Litany of Loreto. By Richard Klaver, O.S.C. 227 pp. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Co. \$3.75.

Union With Our Lady. By Venerable Marie Petyt of St. Teresa. Translated and arranged by Thomas E. McGinnis, O.Carm. 75 pp. New York, N. Y.: The Scapular Press. \$1.00. Paper cover.

The Joys, Sorrows and Glories of the Rosary. By Raphael Grashoff, C.P. 173 pp. St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications. \$1.00.

The Secret of the Rosary. By St. Louis de Montfort. Translated by Mary Barbour, T.O.P. 188 pp. Bay Shore, N. Y.: Montfort Fathers. \$2.50.

Behold the Handmaid. The story of our Blessed Mother. 48 pp. Dayton, Ohio: George A. Pflaum. \$2.5.

Father Emil Neubert, the French theologian of the Society of Mary, has given us a systematic presentation of Marian theology in his book, *Mary in Doctrine*. The book is divided into two sections on the functions and the privileges of Mary. Under the functions are grouped chapters on her divine maternity, spiritual maternity, universal meditation, the priestly aspect of her mission and her sovereignty. The second section includes discussions of the immaculate conception, virginity, holiness, assumption, and her beatitude. The proofs of the doctrine are taken from the standard theological sources of scripture and tradition. This is an excellent outline of the theology of Mary written in a way that the lay person can grasp and understand. While not strictly a devotional book it serves as the solid basis for all true devotion.

The Litany of Loreto is a commentary

on the popular Litany of the Blessed Virgin. The author Father Richard Klaver, has woven the theology of Mary into his explanation of the invocations so that the result is a harmonious blending of doctrine and devotion. The chapters would well serve for daily reading and meditation about the Blessed Mother.

The Venerable Marie Petyt of St. Teresa was one of the mystic souls favored by Our Lord and Our Lady. In the booklet, *Union With Our Lady*, she presents the narrative of her personal devotion to the Blessed Mother. These accounts, written to her director, have been edited and arranged by Father Thomas McGinnis.

The Joys, Sorrows, and Glories of the Rosary was first written by the author for public reading during a lay retreat. Its purpose was to explain the Biblical and theological details of the Rosary so as to furnish material for meditation. The book makes no attempt to develop the devotional implications of the mysteries but does give excellent explanations of the mysteries.

St. Louis De Montfort, who was canonized in 1947, is one of the greatest servants of the Blessed Mother in the history of the Church. *The Secret of the Rosary* contains the teaching on the rosary by the Saint whom the Church calls an "extraordinary preacher of the rosary." Stories and anecdotes serve to exemplify the doctrine and devotion in the book. *The Secret of the Rosary* has been acclaimed as one of the great books on the rosary by modern writers.

Behold the Handmaid is the biography of the Blessed Mother in "comic-book" form. The illustrations and story will please and instruct the young. We welcome this fine "comic-book" story from the presses of the publishers of the "Young Catholic Messenger."

FATIMA

Fatima, Pilgrimage to Peace. By April Oursler Armstrong and Martin F. Armstrong, Jr. 192 pp. Garden City, N. Y.: Hanover House. \$2.00.

This informal narrative by the Armstrongs might be entitled: "Fatima Today." After a very brief resume of the apparitions to the three children, the book describes in a friendly way the people connected with the Fatima story now. It is surprising to hear that a priest at Fatima tells them that "Fatima is nothing" out in the wilds, but Fatima does grow on them as it does on everybody. The visit to the other places connected with the appearances of the angel and the Blessed Mother help them to catch the contagious atmosphere of the place. Charming is the only adjective to describe Ti Marto, the father of Francisco and Jacinta, who hides with the authors in the chicken coop so as to escape the constant stream of visitors and to be able to converse freely with the authors. Readers will be pleased to know some detailed facts about the time of the revelation of the secret. These facts from the lips of the Bishop of Leiria will dispel many false rumors about the secret. The interview with Lucy, now a Carmelite nun, is very interesting.

All in all this is a very fine, informal visit to Fatima with the Armstrongs. It is a leisurely book by the daughter of the late Fulton Oursler and her husband. Those who desire to catch the magic spell of Fatima should take up this book, *Fatima, Pilgrimage to Peace*.

COLOR BOOKS

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of La Salette, Our Lady of Pontmain, Our Lady of Knock, Our Lady of Beauraing, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Banneux. Text by Mary Fabyan Windeatt. Illustrations by Gedge Harmon. St. Meinrad, Ind.: The Grail Publications. \$.25 per copy.

We welcome this series of ten color books for children. The text and illustrations which come from the pens of two talented women, Mary Fabyan Windeatt and Gedge Harmon, are of high quality. The books may be colored with crayons or water colors. The story of Our Lady's shrines is well told and these books should be of great interest to the young.

FOR SISTERS

Proceedings of the 1953 Sisters' Institute of Spirituality. 211 pp. Edited by Joseph E. Haley, C.S.C. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press. \$3.00.

The First National Congress of Religious of the United States which was held at Notre Dame University in 1952 was the inspiration of the Sisters' Institute of Spirituality conducted for Superiors and novicemistresses at the same University in 1953. The purpose of the Institute was to furnish a workshop in the religious life for those charged with the formation and direction of other religious. The faculty of religious priests were fortunate to have as a member Father Paul Philippe, O.P., professor at the Angelican University in Rome and consultant to the Sacred Congregation of Religious. The subjects treated in the lectures and workshops were: The Formation of Novices and the Government of Communities, Ascetical and Mystical Theology, The Liturgy and Religious Life, Canon Law for Religious Superiors, Particular Examen of Conscience, and Growth in Holiness. The lectures and discussions will assist not only superiors but all religious in the development of their own spiritual lives.

THE TEEN-AGER

The April Time. By Celine Meller. 199 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$2.95.

This young author, just barely out of her teens, calls those years *The April Time* of a girl's life. Betsy Cramer lives some of the stirring days of her senior year: the prom, school troubles, dates, and parties. This

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story is well told in a way that will please the girl reader in the upper grades in high school. *The April Time* carries the reader along with its fast moving style and is a creditable first book by a young author, but it is not destined to reach the popularity of Maureen Daly's *Seventeenth Summer*, which is deservedly a minor classic in the field.

SPIRITUAL BOOKS

Christ, Our Life, Our Love. By Rev. Timothy Harris. 178 pp. Dublin, Ireland.: Clonmore and Reynolds. 10/6.

Trinity Whom I Adore. By Dom Eugene Vandeur. Translated by Dominican nuns. 163 pp. New York, N. Y.: Frederick Pustet Co. \$2.75.

A Commentary on the New Little Office. By Rev. John J. Kugler, S.D.B. 95 pp. Paterson, N. J.: Salesiana Publishers. \$2.00.

My Monthly Recollection Day. By Very Rev. William Gier, S.V.D. Edited by Bruno Hagspiel. 177 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$2.50.

Fruitful Confessions. By Rev. A. Simon, O.M.I. 220 pp. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Co. \$3.25.

The Constant Cross. By Rupert Langenstein, C.P. 109 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$2.50.

Father Timothy Harris, a Maynooth Missionary to China, is the author of *Christ, Our Life, Our Love*, which treats of the mysteries of Christ's life as they are commemorated in the great feasts of the Church. The matter is both instructive and devotional.

The young Carmelite Nun, Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity, has been instrumental in bringing many persons to a spiritual awareness of the presence of the Most Holy Trinity in the soul. The well known Benedictine monk, Eugene Vandeur, has taken some of the writings of the Carmelite Nun and used them as the text for meditations filled with a profound sense of Scripture and Liturgy. Religious will find *Trinity*

Whom I Adore a very inspiring book.

A Commentary on the New Little Office contains both the new Latin text of the Psalms and the English translation plus an explanation of the Psalms. Each hour is prefaced by the exposition of the meaning of the hour in the liturgy. Suitable for private use or for public study by all those who recite the little Office out of private devotion or as a sacred obligation.

The veteran retreat Master, Father Bruno Hagspiel, S.V.D., has made a collection of conferences from the works of Very Rev. William Gier, S.V.D., and entitled them *My Monthly Recollection Day*. The first chapters furnish suitable exercises of preparation for the monthly day of Recollection and the remaining chapters have one meditation for the day. The selection of topics is well made and the topics are treated in a spiritually refreshing way.

Fruitful Confessions is a series of suggested spiritual nosegays to be used by the ordinary confessor of religious brothers or nuns. Short pointers are adapted to the proper feasts of the Liturgical year as well as taken from the proper of the Saints. This book will prove invaluable to a confessor who realizes his obligation as teacher and director in the sacrament of penance.

CATHOLIC BOOKLIST

The Catholic Booklist, 1954. Edited by Sister Stella Maris, O.P. 73 pp. St. Catharine, Ky.: St. Catharine Junior College. \$.75.

The Catholic Booklist, published under the direction of the Catholic Library Association, has become a well established feature in the Catholic publishing field. The present edition covers the fields of bibliography, education, fiction, fine arts, history, literature, mission literature, philosophy, religion, social sciences and juvenile literature. The best in each class are presented together with a brief analysis of contents. The busy priest would find this as a welcome aid in recommending books to his people.



Lucid Intervals

Two women were discussing the first sermon of a young curate.

"How did it go?" inquired one.

"'Twas the finest I ever heard. All about hell," answered the other.

"Sure," said the first one, "I have known him since he was an innocent bit of a boy, and what would a pious lad like him know about hell?"

"Well," replied the second woman, "if you heard the sermon, and all he knew about it, ye'd think he was born and raised there."

Warden: "You understand, in this prison work is obligatory and of course you will prefer to be occupied with something that you are acquainted with."

Prisoner: "Yes, Sir. Thank you very much, Sir."

Warden: "What is your occupation?"

Prisoner: "Flyer, Sir."

Mrs. Jones was very proud of her son, who showed promise as an athlete.

"Yes, he must be a very fast runner," she exclaimed proudly to a neighbor. "Look at this newspaper report. It says he fairly burned up the track.

"And it's quite true," she added, confidentially. "I went to see the track this morning, and it's nothing but cinders."

Emerging from a beauty shop, resplendent in a new coiffure, a woman met a neighbor.

"Why, Mary," said the neighbor, "what did you do to your hair? It looks like a wig!"

"It is a wig," replied Mary.

"Well, my goodness," said the neighbor, "I'd never have known it."

A young soldier lost his rifle. Brought before the colonel, he was told he'd have to pay for it.

"Suppose I lost a tank, sir?" asked the soldier. "Would I have to pay for that?"

"Yes," replied the colonel. "Even if it took the rest of your army career to do it."

"Gosh," said the soldier. "Now I know why a captain goes down with his ship."

A certain group of American tourists were being conducted through a famous museum in Europe.

"In this collection," said the guide, "we have the magnificently carved bed that was slept in by King Louis IV, King Louis V and King Louis VI."

"What a gorgeous specimen," gushed one of the women, "But they must have been a bit crowded."

The maid was new and nervous, and when she was told to bring her mistress a glass of milk, she came in with the glass clutched tightly in her hands.

"Jane," fumed the lady of the house, "don't ever do that again. Always bring it in on a tray."

The next evening Jane appeared at the door with an anxious look on her face and a tray full of milk in her hands.

"Excuse me, Ma'am," she said, "shall I bring you a spoon or will you just lap it up?"

"Doctor, there's something wrong with me," exclaimed the patient. "When I go to bed at night I always keep seeing red and green lights in front of my eyes."

"And have you seen an optometrist?" asked the doctor.

"No," replied the patient, thoughtfully, "just the red and green lights."

Amongst Ourselves

One of the traditional and unchanging policies of the editors of THE LIGUORIAN is that this magazine will never be used as a means of begging or collecting money for even the most worthwhile of causes. Many excellent Catholic publications are used by their publishers to solicit funds for important works of charity or zeal. e.g., for the missions, for seminarians, for orphans, for poor priests, etc. But THE LIGUORIAN has a single purpose, which is to instruct, to inspire, and to strengthen those who have the faith, and to lead those who do not yet have it, first, to understand it, and secondly, possibly to embrace it. That is why you will never find in THE LIGUORIAN any direct appeal for donations; that is why THE LIGUORIAN is often sent free to those who cannot afford it; that is why the names and addresses of subscribers to THE LIGUORIAN are never used for the mailing out of appeals for donations to any cause. Sometimes a subscriber who knows that this is our established policy receives begging letters from various Catholic organizations and suspects that these organizations got their name and address from THE LIGUORIAN. We can only say that the suspicion is completely unfounded.

The names and addresses of LIGUORIAN subscribers are never lent, given or sold to any organization for any mailing purpose whatsoever.

We do offer all our current subscribers an opportunity to give a subscription to THE LIGUORIAN as a Christmas gift to relatives, friends or acquaintances, who, they think, would profit by reading it. In fact this is one of the important ways in which THE LIGUORIAN has grown substantially in the number of its readers. Literally thousands of subscribers make it a Christmas gift for their friends, and we cooperate with them by sending a personal Christmas card, together with the December or Christmas issue of THE LIGUORIAN, to the individuals for whom they subscribe. This year, as usual, all who read and profit by THE LIGUORIAN are urged to consider a year's subscription to others who would profit by it. The outside rear cover has a blank that may be used for this purpose; or the blanks received in the mail may be used. Our vast correspondence gives ample proof that, as a Christmas gift, THE LIGUORIAN will be deeply appreciated and enjoyed by a great many people who might thus come to see it for the first time.

IT IS EASY . . .

to determine the date when your subscription to THE LIGUORIAN expires. Look at the address stencilled on the back cover of one of your copies. If the numbers at the end of the first line read "7-54," your subscription began with the 7th month of 1953, and the last issue you are entitled to receive is that of June, 1954.

It saves us time and money if you renew promptly, or before your subscription expires. Just cut the stencilled address from the back cover and send it in with renewal payment. Be sure, too, to cut this address from one of your copies and send it in when requesting a change of address. We are charged extra postage for every copy sent to a wrong address after you have moved.

Appreciated Christmas Gift

We receive many letters from readers who tell us that they first got acquainted with *The Liguorian* through a subscription given them as a Christmas present by a relative or friend. Many of these readers tell us, too, that they in turn intend to make *The Liguorian* their Christmas present to persons who, they are sure, will enjoy it as they enjoy it.

It is a wonderful thing to know beforehand that you are giving something to a friend for Christmas that will be appreciated, and that will cause that person to think of you gratefully and lovingly often during the year.

If you enjoy *The Liguorian* yourself, share the enjoyment with others. Pick out some of your friends now for this gift. Send in their names, and we shall send them a Christmas card in December, about the time they receive their first *Liguorian*.

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